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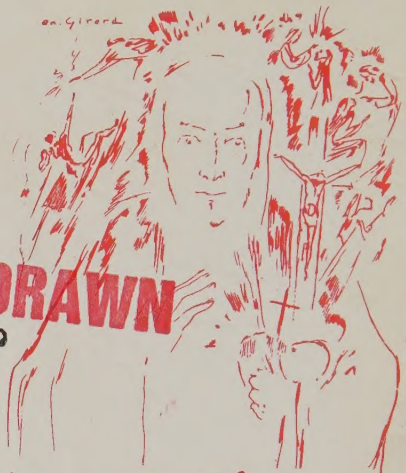

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# LUTHER

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# A FEW PRESS OPINIONS OF VOLUME I

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VOL. III

# THE REFORMER (I)

# LUTHER

## CHAPTER XV

### ORGANISATION AND PUBLIC POSITION OF THE NEW CHURCH

#### 1. Luther's Religious Situation. Was his Reaction a Break with Radicalism?

From the date of the presentation of the "Confession" at the Diet of Augsburg, Lutheranism began to take its place as a new form of religious belief.

Before this it had ostensibly been merely a question of reforming the universal Church, though, as a matter of fact, the proposed reform involved the entire reconstruction of the Church. Now, however, Lutherans admitted—at least indirectly, by putting forward this new profession of faith—that it was their intention to constitute themselves into a distinctive body, in order to impart a permanent character to the recent innovations in belief and practice. The Protestants were prepared to see in Germany two forms of faith existing side by side, unless indeed the Catholic Church should finally consent to accept the "evangelical" Profession of Faith.

It is true, that, in thus establishing a formula of faith which should be binding on their followers, the Lutherans were taking up a position in contradiction with the principle of private judgment in matters of faith, which, in the beginning, they had loudly advocated. This was, however, neither an isolated phenomenon, nor, considering the circumstances, at all difficult to understand. The principles which Luther had championed in the first part of his career, principles of which the trend was towards the complete emancipation of the individual from outward creeds and laws, he had over and again since his first encounters with the fanatics and Anabaptists honoured in the breach, and, if he had not altogether discarded them, he had at least come to explain them very differently.

Hence a certain reaction had taken place in the mind of the originator of the schism upon which in some sense the Confession of Augsburg set a seal.

The extent of this reaction has been very variously estimated. In modern times the contrast between the earlier and later Luther has been so strongly emphasised that we even hear it said that, in the first period of his career, what he stood for was a mere "religion of humanity," that of a resolute "radical," whereas in the second he returned to something more positive. Some have even ventured to speak of the earlier stage of Luther's career, until, say, 1522, as "Lutheran," and of the later as "Protestant."

In order to appreciate the matter historically it will be necessary for us to take a survey of the circumstances as a whole which led to the change in Luther's attitude, and then to determine the effect of these factors by a comparison between his earlier and later life.

Amongst the circumstances which influenced Luther one was his tardy recognition of the fact that the course he had first started on, with the noisy proclamation of freedom of thought and action in the sphere of religion, could lead to no other goal than that of universal anarchy and the destruction of both religion and morality. The Anabaptist rising served to point out to him the results of his inflammatory discourses in favour of freedom. He was determined that his work should not degenerate into social revolution, for one reason because he was anxious to retain the good-will of the mighty, above all of the Elector of Saxony. When the Peasant rising, thanks to the ideas he had himself put forth, began to grow formidable he found himself compelled to make a more determined stand against all forms of radicalism which threatened disintegration. This he did indeed more particularly in the political domain, though his changed attitude here naturally reacted also on his conception of matters religious.

He treated Andreas Carlstadt and Thomas Münzer as foes, not merely because they were turbulent and dangerous demagogues, but also because they were his rivals in the leadership of the movement. The "Spirit," which he had formerly represented as the possession of all who opposed to the old Church their evangelical interpretation of Scripture, he was now obliged to reserve more and more to himself, in

order to put a stop to the destructive effect of the multiplicity of opinions. Instead of the "inward word" he now insisted more and more on the "outward word," viz. on the Bible preaching, as authorised by the authorities, i.e. according to his own interpretation. The mysticism, which had formerly lent a false, idealistic glamour to his advocacy of freedom, gradually evaporated as years went by. Having once secured a large following it was no longer necessary for him to excite the masses by playing to their love of innovation. After the first great burst of applause was over he became, in the second period of his life, rather more sober, the urgent task of establishing order in his party, particularly in the Saxon parishes which adhered to his cause, calling for prudent and energetic action on his side.

In this respect the Visitation in 1527 played a great part in modifying those ideas of his which tended to mere arbitrariness and revolution.

Now that the doctrines of the preachers had been made to conform more and more to the Wittenberg standard; now that the appointment of pastors had been taken out of the hands of the Congregations and left to the ruler of the land, it was only natural that when the new national Church called for a uniform faith, a binding confession of faith, such as that of Augsburg, should be proclaimed, however much such a step, such a "constriction and oppression" of freedom, might conflict with the right of private judgment displayed at the outset on the banner of the movement.

Such were, broadly stated, the causes which led to the remarkable change in Luther's attitude.

On the other hand, those who opine that his ardour had been moderated by his stay at the Wartburg seem to be completely in the wrong. The solitude and quiet of the Wartburg neither taught Luther moderation, nor were responsible for the subsequent reaction. Quite otherwise; at the Wartburg he firmly believed that all that he had paved the way for and executed was mystically confirmed from above, and when, after receiving his "spiritual baptism" within those gloomy walls, he wrote, as one inspired, to the Elector concerning his mission, there was as yet in his language absolutely nothing to show the likeli-

hood of his withdrawing any of the things he had formerly said. Upon his return to Wittenberg he at once took a vigorous part in the putting down of the revolt of the fanatics, not, however, because he disapproved of the changes in themselves—this he expressly disclaims—but because he considered it imprudent and compromising to proceed in so turbulent a manner.[1]

If, in order to estimate the actual extent of the reaction in Luther's mind, we compare his earlier with his later years, we find in the period previous to 1522 a seething, contradictory mixture of radicalism and positive elements.

We say a mixture, for it is not in accordance with the historical sources to say that, in those first stormy years of Luther's career, what he stood for was a mere religion of humanity, or that his mode of thought was quite unchristian. Had this been the case, then the contrast with his later period would indeed be glaring. As it is, however, Luther's statements, as previously given, prove that, in spite of certain discordant voices, his intention had ever been to preserve everything in Christianity which he regarded as really positive, i.e. everything which in his then state of thought and feeling he regarded as essential.[2] Indeed, he was even disposed to exaggerate the importance of a positive faith in Christ and man's dependence upon God at the expense of man's natural power of reason. "In spite of all his calls for freedom and of his pronounced individualism" he preached an extravagant "dependence upon

[1] According to Maurenbrecher, "Studien und Skizzen zur Gesch. der Reformationszeit," p. 235, Luther "fell back from the position he had assumed from 1519 to the beginning of 1521 owing to the subjective, and also objective, impossibility [of proceeding in so radical a way as previously.]" H. Lang, a Protestant, whose "M. Luther, ein religiöses Charakterbild," 1870, he quotes, goes still further, and ascribes to Luther the entire abandonment of his own principles; he is also of opinion that Luther does not disguise the fact that [in the Anabaptist business] he would have considered all in order had the reforms been carried out by himself. "That he was vexed to see others reap where he had sown, is only human nature," says Lang; thus he "sided with the reactionaries," though he had really taught what the fanatics were putting in practice; from that time forward he advocated a "mediæval ecclesiasticism," deprived the Congregations of the management of the reform, which they had set about so vigorously, and transferred it to the rulers. Such a view is widely held among Protestant historians to-day.

[2] Cp. vol. ii., p. 398 f.

God."[1] So far was he from the slightest tendency to embracing a religion of pure reason that he could not find terms sufficiently opprobrious to bestow on reason. We also know that he did not evolve his doctrine of Justification in the second or so-called reaction period, as has recently been stated in order to accentuate the contrast, but in the first period and in the quite early stage of his development.

His Latin Commentary on Galatians (1519), with the new doctrine of Justification,[2] expresses faith in the Redeemer and His Grace in terms of startling force ; he requires of the children of God the fruits of Grace, and attention to every word of Scripture.

After that year and till 1521, the "*Operationes in Psalmos*" prove both his desire for a positive religion and his own earnestness in directing others to lead a Christian life ;[3] the doctrine of Justification therein advocated was admitted by him, even in his old age, to have been "faithfully set forth."[4]

As other examples which certainly do not go to prove any conscious tendency towards theological radicalism, we may mention his work on the Ten Commandments and the Our Father, which he published in 1520 for the unlearned and for children ;[5] the sermons, which he continued the whole year through ; various discourses which he published in 1519, such as that on the Twofold Justice,[6] in which he treats of the indwelling of Christ in man ; that on Preparation for Death, where he inculcates the use of Confession, of the Supper and even of Extreme Unction, teaching that hope is to be placed in Christ alone, and that Saints are to be honoured as followers of Christ ;[7] finally, many other writings, sermons, letters, already dealt with, dating from the time prior to the change.

In view of the statements of this sort with which Luther's early works teem we cannot accept the assertion that the

[1] J. Schmidlin, in the article "Das Luthertum als historische Erscheinung" in the "Wissenschaftl. Beilage zur Germania," 1909, Nos. 14–16, p. 117. The writer even speaks of the "Klotz-Abhängigkeit" on God which was Luther's ideal.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 436 ff. ; Erl. ed., "Comment. in Galat.," 1, p. iii. ff. ; 3, p. 121 f.

[3] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 275 f.

[4] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen" (Loesche, p. 75 ff.).

[5] Cp. Kurcz Form der czehen Gepott, etc., "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 214 ; Erl. ed., 22. p. 15 : "Faith is divided into three principal parts, according to the three persons of the Holy Trinity," etc.

[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 2, p. 41 ff., 143 ff. "Opp. lat. var.," 2, p. 322 *seq.*, 329 *seq.*

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 686, 689 ; Erl. ed., 21, pp. 259, 261. In the latter passage he refers to the "sign of Grace," which is "Christ on the Cross and all His dear Saints."

words "Christ, Gospel, Faith and Conscience" were merely intended by Luther to lend a "semblance of religion" to his negations, and were, on his lips, mere biblical phrases. Louis Saltet, a Catholic historian of the Church, is right in his opinion concerning this new theory: "A negative Lutheranism dominant from 1517 to 1521 is something not vouched for by history"; that the author of the new teaching "had arrived at something very much like theological nihilism is a supposition which there is nothing to prove."[1]

As for Luther's then attitude towards the Bible, he actually exaggerates its importance at the expense of reason by asserting that reason, whilst well aware of the contradictions and the foolishness of the truths of revelation, was nevertheless obliged to accept them. The incomprehensibility, ever taught by theologians, of many of the mysteries of the faith, for the understanding of which human reason alone does not suffice, Luther represents as an open contradiction with reason; reason and philosophy, owing to original sin, must necessarily be in opposition to God, and hence faith does actual violence to reason, forcing it to submit, contrary to its present nature and to that of man. Hence, in his estimate of Holy Scripture, far from being a rationalist, he was, as a modern Protestant theologian puts it, really an "irrationalist," holding as he did that an "unreasonable obedience to Holy Scripture"[2] was required of us. According to this same theologian, Luther starts from "an irrational conception of God's veracity," indeed it is God, Who, according to Luther, "by the gift of faith, produces in man the irrational belief in the truth of the whole Divine Word." Thus does Luther reach his "altogether irrational, cut-and-dry theology."[3] If the Wittenberg Professor asserts later, that no religion is so foolish and contrary to reason as Christianity, and that nevertheless he believes "in one Jew, Who is called and is Jesus Christ,"[4] this belief, so singularly expressed, was already present to him in his first period, and the same may be said, so the authority above referred to declares, of his apparent adoption in later years of more positive views, "since Luther's theological convictions never underwent any essential change."[5]

[1] In "Bull. de littér. ecclésiast.," 1909, p. 198 f.

[2] O. Ritschl, "Dogmengesch. des Protestantismus" ("Prolegomena. Biblicismus und Traditionalismus in der altprotest. Theol."), 1908, p. 98.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 103, 105.

[4] "Tischreden," "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 63. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 7 and p. 100 and other passages where similar phrases occur. He says, for instance, of belief: "The Articles of Faith are contrary to all philosophy, geometry, arithmetic and indeed to all reason. It is a question of '*est*,' '*non*,' yes and no. This no one can reconcile." For this reason he would not come to any "agreement" with Zwingli, who thought otherwise.

[5] Ritschl, *ibid.*, p. 79.

If from the positive we pass to the negative side of Luther's teaching, we do indeed find the latter more predominant during the first period of his career. An almost revolutionary assertion of religious freedom is found side by side with the above utterances on faith, so that Adolf Harnack could with some justice say that "Kant and Fichte both are concealed in this Luther."[1]

"Neither Pope, nor bishop, nor any man," according to what Luther then says, "has a right to dictate even a syllable to the Christian without his own consent."[2] If you have grasped the Word in faith, then "you have fulfilled all the commandments and must be free from all things"; the believer becomes "spiritually lord of all," and by virtue of his priestly dignity, "he has power over all things."[3] "No laws can be imposed upon Christians by any authority whatsoever, neither by men, nor by angels, except with their own consent, for we are free of all things."[4] "What is done otherwise is gross tyranny. . . . We may not become the servants of men." "But few there are who know the joy of Christian liberty."[5]

Applying this to faith and the interpretation of Scripture, he says, for instance, in 1522: "Formerly we were supposed to have no authority to decide," but, by the Gospel which is now preached, "all the Councils have been overthrown and set aside"; no one on earth has a right to decree what is to be believed. "If I am to decide what is false doctrine, then I must have the right to judge." Pope and Councils may enact what they will, "but I have my own right to judge, and I may accept it or not as I please." At the hour of death, he continues, each one must see for himself how he stands; "you must be sharp enough to decide for yourself that this is right and that wrong, otherwise it is impossible for you to hold your own." "Your head is in danger, your life is at stake; God must speak within your breast and say: 'This is God's Word,' otherwise all is uncertain. Thus you must be convinced within yourself, independent of all men."[6]

The individualistic standpoint could scarcely be expressed more strongly. The appeal to the voice of God "speaking in the heart" renders it all the more forcible by introducing a pseudo-mystic element. It is an individualism which might

[1] "Preuss. Jahrbücher," 136, 1909, p. 35, in dealing with Luther's "thisworldliness."

[2] "De captivitate babyl.," "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 536; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 68.

[3] From the writing "Von der Freyheyt eynes Christen Menschen," "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, pp. 23, 27 f.; Erl. ed., 27, pp. 179, 185 f.

[4] "De capt. bab.," "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 537; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 70.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 536 f. = 68, 70.

[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 258 ff.; Erl. ed., $13^2$, p. 228 f.

logically be made to justify every form of unbelief. In such devious paths as these did Luther lose himself when once he had set aside the doctrinal authority of the Church.

In his practical instructions and in what he says on the most important points of the doctrine of salvation, he ever arrogates to himself a liberty which is in reality mere waywardness.

If the Sacraments were committed to the Church by her Divine Founder, then she must put the faithful under the obligation of making use of them in the way Christ intended; she may not, for instance, leave her subjects free to bring their children to be baptised or not, to confess or not to do so, to receive the Sacrament of the Altar or to refrain from receiving it altogether. She may, indeed she must, exercise a certain compulsion in this respect by means of ecclesiastical penalties. Luther, however, refused to hear of the Church and her authority, or of any duty of obedience on the part of the faithful, the result being that the freedom which he proclaimed nullified every obligation with respect to the Sacraments.

In the booklet which he composed in the Wartburg, "Von der Beicht ob der Bapst Macht habe zu gepieten" (1521), wherein he sets aside the duty of Confession, he says of the use of the Sacraments, without troubling to exclude even Baptism: "He [man] is at liberty to make use of Confession if, as, and where he chooses. If he does not wish you may not compel him, for no one has a right to or ought to force any man against his will. Absolution is nevertheless a great gift of God. In the same way no man can, or ought to, be forced to believe, but everyone should be instructed in the Gospel and admonished to believe; though he is to be left free to obey or not to obey. All the Sacraments should be left optional to everyone. Whoever does not wish to be baptised, let him be. Whoever does not wish to receive the Sacrament, has a right not to receive; therefore, whoever does not wish to confess is free before God not to do so." [1]

The receiving of Holy Communion, he declared then and on other occasions, was to remain optional, although in later years he was most severe in insisting upon it. Concerning this Sacrament, at the commencement of 1520 in his "Erklerung etlicher Artickel," he said that Christ had not made the reception of the Sacrament compulsory; reception under one kind or under both was not prescribed, although "it would be a good thing to receive under both kinds." [2]

May we, however, say that Luther made the reception of the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 157; Erl. ed., 27, p. 343.

[2] "Since Christ never commanded that the Sacrament should be received by everyone, it is permissible not only to receive only under one kind, but under neither." "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 79; Erl. ed., 27, p. 72. Cp. Weim. ed., 6, p. 507: "*Cum Christus non praecepisset ulla (specie) uti.*"

Sacrament of Baptism entirely optional? Did he go so far as to consider Baptism as something not necessary? The passage just quoted, which does away so thoroughly with the duty of Confession and instances Baptism as a parallel case, is certainly somewhat surprising with regard to Baptism. Luther's train of thought in the passage in question is, however, rather confused and obscure. Is he referring to the liberty of the unbaptised to receive or not receive the Sacrament of Baptism, or to the deferring of Baptism, whether in the case of the adult or in that of the children of Christian parents?

He certainly always held Baptism itself to be absolutely essential for salvation;[1] only where it could not be had, was faith able to produce its effects. Hence, in the above passage, stress must be laid on the words "no one can be forced," Luther's meaning being that constraint in the case of this Sacrament is as intolerable as in the case of the others. He, moreover, declares immediately afterwards that Christ demands "Baptism and the Sacrament." Elsewhere, when again advocating freedom in the matter of Confession and defending the work above referred to, he says: "I will have no forcing and compelling. Faith and baptism I commend; no one, however, may be forced to accept it, but only admonished and then left free to choose."[2] Nevertheless he had certainly not been sufficiently careful in his choice of words, and had allowed too great play to his boisterous desire for freedom, when, at the conclusion of the passage quoted from his booklet "On Confession," he seemingly asserts man's "freedom before God," not only in the matter of Confession and Communion, but also in that of Baptism. Yet the object of the whole tract was to show what the result would be, more particularly in the matter of Confession and Excommunication, were Christ's commandments in Holy Scripture put in practice, instead of attending only to the man-made ordinances of Popes and Councils.[3]

One modern school of Protestant unbelief professes to base itself on the earlier Luther, and, in almost every particular, justifies itself by appealing to him.

Such theologians are, however, overstepping the limits of what is right and fair when they make out the Luther of that earlier period to have been a true representative of that form of unbelief just tinged with religion which is their own ideal. As a matter of fact, Luther, had he been logical, should have arrived at this conclusion, but he preferred to turn aside, repudiate it, and embrace the profound contra-

[1] The Larger Catechism of 1529, "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 129: "Here (in Scripture) we have God's command and institution"; hence it is "seriously and strictly commanded that we be baptised on pain of not being saved."

[2] To Haupold and others on September 17, 1521, "Werke," Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 257, and *ibid.*, 53, p. 77 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 236).

[3] The editor of the Weimar ed., 8, p. 132.

diction involved in the union of that right of private judgment he had proclaimed, with the admission of binding dogmas. Freedom in the interpretation of the sense of Scripture, or more correctly the setting aside of all ecclesiastical and ostensibly human authority, has been termed the formal principle of Lutheranism; the doctrine of Justification, viz. the chief doctrine of Lutheranism, was called by the older theologians its material principle. Both principles were at variance with each other in Luther's mind, just as there can be no composition between arbitrary judgment and formulæ of faith. History has to take Luther as he really was; he demanded the fullest freedom to oppose the Church and her representatives who claimed the right to enact laws concerning faith and morals, but he most certainly was not disposed to hear of any such freedom where belief in revelation, or the acceptance of God's commandments, was concerned. In the domain of the State, too, he had no intention of interfering with due subjection to the authorities, though his hasty, ill-considered utterances seemed to invite the people to pull down every barrier.

In the second period, from 1522 onwards, his tone has changed and he becomes, so to speak, more conservative and more "religious."

The principle of freedom of interpretation he now proclaims rather more cautiously, and no longer appeals in so unqualified a manner to the universal priesthood and the sovereignty of the Congregation in matters of religion. Now that the State has come to assume the direction of the Church, Luther sees fit to make his own some of the conservative ideas usually dear to those in power. As a preservative against abuse of freedom he lays great stress on the "office," and the call to the work of preaching given by superior authority. "Should a layman so far forget himself as to correct a preacher," says Heinrich Böhmer when dealing with Luther's attitude at this period, "and speak publicly, even to a small circle, on the Word of God, it becomes the duty of the authorities, in the interests of public order, to proceed against him as a disturber of the peace. How contradictory this was with the great Reformer's previous utterances is patent, though very likely he himself did not clearly perceive it. The change in his convictions on

this point had taken place all unnoticed simultaneously with the change in the inward and outward situation of the evangelical party. . . . That his [earlier] view necessarily called not only for unrestricted freedom to teach, but also for complete freedom of worship, was indeed never fully perceived by the Reformer himself." [1]

The two divergent tendencies, one positive and the other negative, are apparent throughout Luther's career.

The positive tendency is, however, more strongly emphasised in the second period. We shall hear him giving vent to the most bitter complaints concerning those who interpret Holy Scripture according to their own ideas and introduce their own notions into the holy and unchanging Word of God. As exemplifying his own adherence to the truths of Christianity, the great and solemn profession of faith contained in the work he wrote in 1528 on the Supper, has been rightly instanced. As P. Albert Weiss remarks, he makes this "fine profession with an energy which goes straight to the heart" and "in words which bear honourable testimony to the depth of his conviction"; it is true that here, too, the contrast to the Catholic Church, whose belief he so passionately depreciates, forces itself like a spectre before his mind.[2] "This is my belief," he says at the end of the list of Christian dogmas which he accepts, "for this is what all true Christians believe and what Holy Scripture teaches. Whatever I may have left unsaid here will be found in my booklets, more particularly in those published during the last four or five years."[3]

[1] "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," 1906, p. 127 (omitted in the 2nd edition). In 1524 Luther, when engaged with Münzer, still held that "all should preach stoutly and freely as they were able and against whomsoever they pleased. . . . Let the spirits fall upon one another and fight it out. Should some be led astray, so much the worse." True doctrine being the fittest would nevertheless survive and prevail. To the Elector Frederick and Duke Johann of Saxony, July, 1524, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 265 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 372). The contradiction involved in the freedom which Luther apparently concedes to him was pointed out by Münzer in his "Schutzrede," Fol. C. III., "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 375. Hence when Luther counselled that the revolt should be put down by force of arms, those who considered the war unjust, for instance because they happened to hold Anabaptist views, could well appeal to Luther and refuse to lend their assistance. (See present work, vol. ii., p. 311 f.)

[2] A. Weiss, "Luther und Luthertum," Denifle, vol. ii., 1909, p. 251 f.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 509; Erl. ed., 30, p. 372 f.

Hence when it is asserted by Protestants of rationalist leanings that Luther recognised only one form of faith, viz. trust in Christ, and that he reduced all religion to this, it should be pointed out that he required at the same time a belief in all revealed truths, and that his doctrine of confident faith in one's personal salvation and of trust in a Gracious God and Saviour, was ultimately based on a general act of faith; "Faith," he says, in a sermon which was later embodied in his Church-postils, "really means accepting as true from the bottom of our heart what the Gospel says concerning Christ, and also all the articles of faith."[1] It is true that Luther ever insisted on awakening of confidence, yet the "*fides fiducialis*" as explained by him always presupposes the existence of the "*fides historica*."

With Luther faith in the whole of Divine revelation comes first, then the trusting faith which "trusts all to God."[2]

"His whole manner of life," Otto Ritschl says, "so far as it was directed to the attainment of practical aims, was fundamentally religious, in the same way as his most important doctrines concerning God, Christ, the Law, Sin, Justification, the Forgiveness of Sins and Christian Freedom all breathe the spirit of faith, which, as such, was confidence." The Protestant theologian from whom we quote these words thinks it necessary to say of the contradictions in Luther which have been instanced by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, that "at least in Luther's own way of thinking," they were not such, for he based his faith on the "revelation given by God's Word in Holy Scripture."[3]

In the polemical writings directed against Luther, it was pointed out, concerning his faith, that he himself had described faith as a mere "fancy and supposition" (*opinio*). We would,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $12^2$, p. 221.

[2] Though it might be urged that he subordinates the first too much to the second even in his earlier period. In the "Kurcz Form der czehen Gepott," etc. (1520), "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 215; Erl. ed., 22, p. 15, he teaches: "that there are two ways of believing: First, concerning God, when I believe what is said of God to be true, just as I believe that to be true which is said of the Turks, of the devil, or of hell; this faith is more a sort of knowledge, or observation, than real faith. According to the other we believe *in* God (*Credo in Deum*), i.e. when I not only believe that to be true which is said of God, but place my trust in Him. . . . It is only such a faith which hazards all on God . . . which makes a Christian. . . . This is a living faith . . . and this none can give but God alone." The Catholic Church, however, had always required a "living faith," one working by charity (*fides caritate formata*). It is remarkable how much, in the above passage, Luther allows the formal principle of historical faith, viz. the authority of the Revealing God, to recede into the background.

[3] O. Ritschl, "Dogmengesch. des Protestantismus," I, p. 81.

however, suggest the advisability of considerable caution, for according to other passages and from the context, it is plain that what he intends by the word "*opinio*" is rather a belief, and, besides, he adds the adjective "*firma*" to the word incriminated. It is of course a different question whether the absolute certainty of faith can be attributed to that faith on which he lays such great stress, viz. the purely personal *fides fiducialis* in one's salvation through Christ, and, further, whether this certainty can be found in the articles, which, according to Luther's teaching, the Christian deduces from the Word of God in Scripture by a subjective examination in which he has only his own private judgment to depend on.

However this may be, we find Luther till the very end insisting strongly on the submission of reason to the Word of God, so that E. Troeltsch, the Heidelberg theologian, could well describe his attitude as mediæval on account of the subjection he demands to dogma. For this very reason he questions the view, that Luther really "paved the way for the modern world." Troeltsch, nevertheless, is not disinclined to see in Luther's independence of thought a considerable affinity with the spirit of modern days.[1] This brings us to the other side of the subject.

Let us follow up the other, the negative, tendency in Luther, from 1522 onwards, which makes for complete religious independence.

Of one doctrine in which it is manifest Harnack says, and his statement is equally applicable to others: "The universal priesthood of all the faithful was never relinquished by Luther, but he became much more cautious in applying it to the congregations actually in existence."[2] Luther, according to him, expresses himself "very variably" concerning the "competency of the individual congregations, of the congregations as actually existing or as representing the true Church."

The author of the schism, in spite of all the positive elements he retained during the whole of this period of reaction and till the very end, had no settled conception of the Church, and the subjective element, and with it the negative, disintegrating tendency therefore necessarily predominated in his mind. It is not only Catholics, from their standpoint,

[1] "Histor. Zeitschrift," 97, p. 1 ff. Art.: "Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt," p. 28: "It is evident that Protestantism cannot be regarded as directly paving the way for the modern world. On the contrary, it appears rather as an entire reversion to mediæval fashions of thought. It is shown that Protestantism was and yet is, at least to some extent, a hindrance to the development of the modern world."

[2] "Dogmengesch.," 3[4], p. 830, n.

who assert that his whole life's work was above all of a destructive character, for many Protestant writers who look below the surface agree with them, notwithstanding all their appreciation for Luther.

"Wittenberg," says Friedrich Paulsen, "was the birthplace of the revolutionary movement in Germany. . . . Revolution is the fittest name by which to describe it." The term "Reformation," is, he declares, inexact; a "reformation," according to Paulsen, was what "the great Councils of the fifteenth century sought to bring about." "Luther's work was not a 'reformation,' a re-shaping of the existing Church by her own means, but a destruction of the old form; indeed, we may say, a thoroughgoing denial of the Church." Paulsen points out that, in his work addressed to the knights of the Teutonic Order, Luther advocates "ecclesiastical anarchy" in seeking to lead them to despise all spiritual authority and to break their vow of chastity. The tract in question was repeatedly published as a broadside, and passed into the Wittenberg and other early collections of his works.[1]

From the Catholic standpoint, says Gustav Kawerau, "Paulsen was quite right in branding Luther as a revolutionary"; Luther's new wine could not, however, so he says, do otherwise than burst the old bottles.[2]

The "wine" which Luther had to offer was certainly in a state of fermentation, which, with his rejection of all ecclesiastical authority, made it savour strongly of nihilism. According to Luther religious truth had been altogether disfigured even in Apostolic times, owing to the rise of the doctrine of free-will. "For at least a thousand years," he repeatedly asserts, truth had been set aside because, owing to the illegal introduction of external authority in the Church, "we have been deprived of the right of judging and have been unjustly forced to accept what the Pope and the Councils decreed"; yet no one can "determine or decide for others what faith is," and, since Christ has warned us against false prophets, "it clearly follows that I have a right to judge of doctrine."[3]

One person only has the right—of this he is ever sure—

[1] Letter of December, 1523, "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 232; Erl. ed., 29, p. 16 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 266). There we read: "God is older than all the Councils and the Fathers." "Are we to send God to school and prune the feathers (quill pens) of the Holy Ghost?" "We hazard all on the Word . . . against all the Churches." *Ibid.*, p. 235-238=21-25.

[2] "Theolog. Literaturztg.," 1884, p. 37 *seq.*

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., $13^2$, p. 228. Church postils

to proclaim doctrines as undeniable truths come down from heaven. "I am certain that I have my dogmas from heaven." [1] "I am enlightened by the Spirit, He is my teacher." [2] "We have seen him raised up by God," so his friends declared immediately after his death, [3] and, so far as they were in agreement with him, they claimed a heavenly authority on his behalf. In spite of all this Luther never saw fit to restrict in principle the freedom of determining and judging doctrine; the meaning of Scripture he permits every man to search out, the one indispensable condition being, that Scripture should be interpreted under the inspiration of the Spirit from on high, in which case he presumed that the interpretation would agree with his own. The numerous "clear and plain" passages from Scripture which were to guide the interpreter, were to him a guarantee of this; he himself had followed nothing else. The misfortune is that he never attempted to enumerate or define these passages, and that many of those very passages which appeared to him so clear and plain were actually urged against him; for instance, the words of institution by the Zwinglians and the texts on Justification by certain of his followers and by the Catholics.

The fact that freedom in the interpretation of the Bible produced, and must necessarily produce, anarchy of opinion, has, by the representatives of the Rationalistic school of Protestant theology, been urged against the positive elements which Luther chose to retain. The tendency which, had he not set himself resolutely against it, would have brought Luther even in later years face to face with a purely naturalistic view of life, has been clearly and accurately pointed out. Paul Wernle, a theologian whose ideal of a renewed Christianity is a natural religion clad in religious dress, points to the anarchy resulting from the multitude of interpretations, and attacks Luther's Bible faith for the contradictions it involves. "The appeal to 'Bible Christianity,' and 'Primitive New Testament Christianity,' produced a whole crop of divergent views of Christianity"; "the limitations of this Renascence of Christianity," which was no real Renascence at all, are, he says, very evident; Luther had summed up "the theology of Paul in a one-sided fashion, purely from the point of view of fear of, and consolation in, sin"; his comprehension

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 184; "Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 391.
[2] *Ibid.*, 6, p. 540=5, p. 74.
[3] Through the "Reformer sent by God," the Father had "revealed" the mystery of His Son. Thus Bugenhagen, on February 22, 1546. Cp. vol. vi., XL., 2.

of Paul was "one-sided, repellent and narrow," and, in favour of Paul, "he depreciated most unjustly the first three Gospels"; the new theology "rested exclusively on Romans and Galatians," and, root and branch, is full of contradictions.[1]

Luther himself invited such criticism by his constant advocacy of individualism in his later no less than in his earlier years. "If individualism be introduced even into religious life," writes E. Troeltsch, "then the Church loses her significance as an absolute and objective authority." And concerning the "whole crop of views on Christianity" which sprang from such individualism, he says with equal justice: "A truth which can and must live in so many embodiments, can of its very nature never be expressed in one simple and definable form. It is in its nature to undergo historical variations and to take on different forms at one and the same time."[2] But this is the renunciation of stable truth, in other words: scepticism.

Denifle put it clearly and concisely when he said: "Luther planted the seed of present-day Protestant incredulity."[3]

"The tendency of the Reformation," declares W. Herrmann, a representative of ultra-liberal Protestant theology, was in the direction of the views he holds, viz. towards a rationalistic Christianity, not at all towards "the view of religion dear to orthodox theology." He is convinced, that "it is high time for us to resume the work of the Reformers and of Schleiermacher, and to consider what we are really to understand by religion." Religion is not an "unreasoning" faith in dogmas, nor a "non-moral" assent to alien ideas, "but a personal experience" such as the great Reformation doctrine of Justification rightly assumed. Yet, even now, theologians still lack that "comprehension of religion common to all." All that is needed is to take Luther's ideas in real earnest, for, according to Herrmann, the "true Christian understanding of what faith, i.e. religion [in the above, modern sense], is, was recovered at the Reformation." Thus only, he concludes, can we escape from the hindrances to belief presented by the present development of science."[4]

It is with a similar appeal to Luther that another theologian, P. Martin Rade, the editor of the "Christliche Welt," spreads his sails to the blast of modern infidelity. According to him Luther was "one of the fathers of subjectivism and of modern ways"; Luther, by his doctrine of Justification by faith, gave to subjective piety "its first clumsy expression"; the faith which Luther taught the world was an "individual staking" of all on God's mercy. Yet, he complains, there are people within the Evan-

[1] "Die Renaissance des Christentums im 16 Jahrh.," 1904, p. 30 ff.

[2] "Die christliche Religion" in "Kultur der Gegenwart," I, p. 4, 397. *Ibid.*: "The final result is the recognition by Protestantism of an internal antinomy of religion and Church, which are unable to subsist without each other nor yet to suffer each other, from which conflict there can only spring a fresh presentment of the purer, churchless, Christian idea."

[3] "Luther und Luthertum," 1, p. 689 ($1^2$, p. 723).

[4] "Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche," 18, 1908, p. 74 *seq.*, 147 *seq.*

gelical Church who are still afraid of subjectivism. "This fear torments the best, and raises a mighty barrier in front of those who struggle onwards." The barrier is composed of the articles of the creed which have remained upstanding since Luther's day. And yet "each scholar can, and may, only represent Christianity as it appears to him." "For us Protestants there is in these circumstances only one way. We recognise no external authority which could cut the knot for us. Hence we must take our position seriously, and embrace and further the cause of subjectivism." Thanks to Luther "religion has been made something subjective; too subjective it can never be . . . all precautions adopted to guard against religious subjectivism are really unevangelical." We must, on the contrary, say with Luther: "God will always prevail and His Word remains for all eternity, and His truth for ever and ever." "Let the Bible speak for itself and work of itself" without any "human dogma," and then you have the true spirit of Luther's Reformation, "the very spirit which breathed through it from the day when it first began to play its part in the history of the world." This writer is well acquainted with the two great objections to that principle of Luther, which he praises, yet he makes no attempt to answer them any more than Luther himself did. The first is: "Where is all this to end? Where shall we find anything stable and certain?" He simply consoles the questioner by stating that "Science provides its own remedy." The second objection is: "But the masses require to be governed, and educated," in other words, religion must be an assured, heaven-sent gift to all men, whereas only the few are capable of proving things for themselves and following the profession of the learned. "Herein lies the problem," is the resigned answer, "which we do not fail to recognise, and with it Protestantism has hitherto proved itself sadly incapable of grappling"; "entirely new forces are required" for this purpose. Whence these forces are to come, we are not told.[1]

That all are not determined to follow the course which Luther had entered upon is but natural. To many the Wittenberg Professor remains simply a guardian of the faith, a bulwark of conservatism, and even the safety-valve he opened many would fain see closed again. Characteristic of this group is the complaint recently brought forward by the Evangelical "Monatskorrespondenz" against Friedrich Nietzsche, for having described Luther's reformation, with scant respect, as the "Peasant Revolt of the mind," and spoken of the "destruction of throne and altar" which he had brought about.[2]

If, from the above, we attempt to judge of the range of Luther's so-called "reaction" in his second period, we find that it can no more be regarded as a return to positive

[1] "Christliche Welt," 1904, No. 26.
[2] "Monatskorr. des Evangel. Bundes," 1908, No. 9.

beliefs than his first period can be described as almost wholly Rationalistic. In both cases we should be guilty of exaggeration ; in the one stage as well as in the other there is a seething mixture of radical principles and tendencies on the one hand, and of Christian faith and more positive ones on the other. In his earlier years, however, Luther allows the former, and, in the second, the latter to predominate. Formerly, at the outset of the struggle, he had been anxious to emphasise his discovery which was to be the loosing of imaginary bonds, while the old beliefs he still shared naturally retreated more or less into the background ; now, owing partly to his calmer mode of thought, partly to insure greater stability to his work and in order to shake off the troublesome extremists, Luther was more disposed to display the obverse of the medal with the symbols of faith and order, without however repudiating the reverse with the cap of liberty. How he contrived to reconcile these contradictions in his own mind belongs to the difficult study of his psychology. On account of these contradictions he must not, however, be termed a theological nihilist, since he made the warmest profession of faith in the principles of Christianity ; neither may he be called a hero of positive faith, seeing that he bases everything on his private acceptance. To describe him rightly we should have to call him the man of contradictions, for he was in contradiction not merely with the Church, but even with himself. The only result of the so-called reaction in Luther during the 'twenties, and later, was the bringing into greater prominence of this inner spirit of contradiction.

The startling antagonism between negation and belief within his mind found expression in his whole action. Though his character, his vivacity, imaginativeness and rashness concealed to some extent the rift, his incessant public struggles also doing their part in preventing him from becoming wholly alive to the contradictions in his soul, yet in his general behaviour, in his speech, writings and actions we find that instability, restlessness and inconstancy which were the results at once of this contrast and of the fierce struggle going on within him. The vehemence which so frequently carries him away was a product of this state of ferment. Often we find him attempting to smother his consciousness of it by recourse to jesting. His conviviality

and his splendid gift of sympathy concealed from his friends the antagonism he bore within him. All that the public, and most of his readers, perceived was the mighty force of his eloquence and personality and the wealth and freshness of his imagery. They sufficed to hide from the common herd the discrepancies and flaws inherent in his standpoint.

Wealth and versatility, such are the terms sometimes applied by Protestants to the frequent contradictions met with in his statements. In the same way the ambiguity of Kant's philosophy has been accounted one of its special advantages, whereas ambiguity really denotes a lack of sequence and coherence, or at the very least a lack of clearness. Truth undefiled displays both wealth and beauty without admixture of obscurity or of ambiguity.

Luther's "wealth" was thus described by Adolf Hausrath: "Every word Luther utters plays in a hundred lights and every eye meets with a different radiance, which it would gladly fix. His personality also presents a hundred problems. Of all great men Luther was the most paradoxical. The very union, so characteristic of him, of mother-wit and melancholy is quite peculiar. His wanton humour seems at times to make a plaything of the whole world, yet the next moment this seemingly incurable humorist is oppressed with the deepest melancholy, so that he knows not what to do with himself. . . . In one corner of his heart lurks a demon of defiance who, when roused, carries away the submissive monk to outbursts which he himself recognises as the work of some alien force, stronger than his firmest resolutions. He was the greatest revolutionary of the age and yet he was a conservative theologian, yea, conservative to obstinacy. . . . He insisted at times upon the letter as though the salvation of the entire Church depended upon it, and yet we find him rejecting whole books of the Bible and denying their Apostolic spirit. Reason appears to him as a temptress from the regions of enchantment, intellect as a mere rogue, who proves to his own satisfaction just what he is desirous of seeing proved, and yet, armed with this same reason and intellect, Luther went out boldly into the battle-fields of the prolonged religious war."[1]

### 2. From the Congregational to the State Church Secularisations

In the first stage of his revolt against the Church, Luther had imagined that the new order of things could be brought about amongst his followers merely by his declaiming against outward forms; repeatedly he asserted that the Christian

[1] "Luthers Leben," 1, p. vii. f.

life consisted wholly in faith and charity, that faith would display its power spontaneously in good works, and that thus everything would arrange itself; a new and better Church would spring up within the old one, though minus a hierarchy, minus all false doctrine and holiness-by-works.

Up to the commencement of the 'twenties his efforts had, in fact, been directed not to the setting up of new congregations but to the reconstruction of the existing Church system. Previous to his drafting of the plan comprised in the writing he sent to Prague, on the appointment of ecclesiastical ministers (vol. ii., p. 111 f.), in which we find the congregational organisation proposed as a model for the German Church, he was as yet merely desirous of paving the way for what he looked on as a reformation within the already existing Church, and this by means of the rulers and nobles.

His work "An den christlichen Adel," to which we must now return in order to consider it from this particular standpoint, was composed with this object. By it he sought to rouse the rulers and those in power who had opened their hearts to the "Christian" faith, i.e. to the new Evangel, to take in hand the moral and religious reformation on the lines indicated by himself. Thus he appealed, as almost all sectarians had instinctively done from the very first, to the secular authorities and the power of the Princes in order to attain his special ecclesiastical ends. The secular Estates, already covetous of increased power and independence, were invited in these fiery pages to take their stand against the Papacy and the hierarchy, just as they would against "a destroyer of Christendom,"[1] and "to punish them severely" on account of divers disorders and "for their abuse of excommunication and their shocking blasphemies against the name of God,"[2] in short, "to put an end to the whole affair."[3] The last words, found in the writing "On

[1] "An den christlichen Adel," "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 428; Erl. ed., 21, p. 307.

[2] *Ibid.*, 429=308.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 258; Erl. ed., 16², pp. 197 f.: "Seeing that Bishops and Prelates remain quiescent, do not resist, care but little and so leave Christendom to go to destruction, we must humbly implore God's help to oppose the evil, and after that put our own hands to the job. . . . It is not right that we should support the servants and menials of the Pope and even his court fools and harlots to the harm and injury of our souls. . . . These, surely, are the real

good works," were addressed to the "King, the Princes, Nobles, Townships and people generally."

Thus to force the two powers, secular and ecclesiastical, out of their spheres, handing over the supervision of the Church to the secular authorities[1] can only be characterised as an attack upon the whole Christian and moral order of things, on the whole previous development of the Church and on the highest principles of religion. It is true that the Catholic States had already appropriated many of the rights really appertaining to the Church, but to carry their interference so far as Luther advised, had never yet occurred to them. Indeed, the subversion of order planned by Luther was so great, that the impossibility of carrying out his project must have speedily become apparent to him. As a matter of fact, the actual number of those whose hearts had been awakened by the Evangel to the extent of sharing Luther's extreme views was not at all considerable.

When anxious friends pointed out to Luther how revolutionary his undertaking was, his excuse was merely this: "I am blameless, seeing that my only object is to induce the nobles of Germany to set a limit to the encroachments of the Romanists by passing resolutions and edicts, not by means of the sword; for to fight against an unwarlike clergy would be like fighting against women and children."[2] Hence, so long as no blood was shed, the overthrow of the legal status of the Church met with his full approval.

The torrents of angry abuse which Luther soon afterwards poured forth upon those in power because they would

Turks whom the King, the Princes and the Nobles ought to attack first," just as a father of a family who has gone out of his mind "must be placed under restraint and controlled. . . . The best and only thing to do was, for the King, Princes, Nobles, townships and parishes to put their hands to the business and make an end of it themselves, so that the bishops and clergy, who are so timorous, may be able to follow. . . . Nor must any attention be paid to the ban and the threats by means of which they fancy they can save their skins."

[1] In strange contrast, to the last passage quoted, he goes on to inculcate the most respectful obedience to the secular authorities: "Even though they do what is wrong, still God wills that they should be obeyed without subterfuge or danger" (p. 259=198). They have "nothing to do with the preaching and the faith." "They must not be resisted even though they do what is unjust" (*ibid.*). "There are many abuses prevalent amongst the secular authorities," etc. (p. 260=199). He is accordingly very anxious for their improvement.

[2] To Spalatin, February 27, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 90.

not follow his call and allow themselves to be "awakened," were simply proofs of the futility of his plan.

No demagogue had ever before filled Germany with such noisy abuse of the Princes as Luther now did in works intended for the masses, where he declared, for instance, that "God has sent our Rulers mad"; that "they command their subjects just what they please"; that they are "scamps" and "fools"; that he is forced to resist, "at least by word," these "ungracious Lords and angry squires" on account of their "blasphemies against the Divine Majesty."[1] He denounced them to the populace as having heaped together their "gold and goods" unjustly, just as "Nimrod had acquired his goods and his gold."[2] He accuses them "of allowing everything to drift, and of hindering one another"; "plenty of them even vindicate the cause of Antichrist,"[3] therefore the Judgment of God must fall upon our "raving Princes." "God has blinded them and made them stupid that they may run headlong to destruction."[4]

This he wrote on the eve of the fearful events of the Peasant Rising.

Thus his ideal of the future was now shattered, viz. the spiritual society and new Christendom which he had planned to establish with the help of the Princes. "This dream passed rapidly away. All that remained was a deep-seated pessimism. . . . From that time the persuasion grew on him that the world will always remain the same, that it can never be governed according to the Evangel and can never be rendered really Christian; likewise, that true Christians will always be but few in number."[5]

Hence these few Christians must become the object of his solicitude. He is more and more inspired by the fantastic notion that Popery is to be speedily overthrown by God

[1] Preface to the writing "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt wie weytt man yhr Gehorsam schuldig sey" (1523). "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 246; Erl. ed., 22, p. 62 f.

[2] "Vom Missbrauch der Messen," 1521–1522, "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 561; Erl. ed., 28, p. 139. To Spalatin, August 15, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 219: "*Principem esse et non aliqua parte latronem esse, aut non aut vix possibile est, eoque maiorem, quo maior princeps fuerit.*" This he says in excuse of his acceptance of the hospitality of the Wartburg offered him by the Elector.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 679; Erl. ed., 22, p. 48 f. "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt."

[4] To the Elector Frederick and Duke Johann of Saxony, July, 1524. "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 210 f.; Erl. ed., 55, p. 256 f. ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 372). Cp. for above passages P. Drews "Entsprach das Staatskirchentum dem Ideale Luthers?" in "Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche," 18, 1908, Ergänzungsheft, p. 31 ff.

[5] Drews, *ibid.*, p. 34.

Himself, by His Word and by the breath of His Mouth. In the meantime he expects the new Church to develop spontaneously from the congregations by the power of God, even though at first it should consist of only a small number of faithful souls.

The congregational ideal, as a passing stage in his theory of Church formation, absorbed him, as we have already seen, more particularly from the year 1523. The congregations were to be self-supporting after once the new teaching had been introduced amongst them. In accordance with the Evangel, they were to be quite independent and to choose their own spiritual overseers. From among these, superintendents were to be selected, to be at the head of the congregations of the country, and as it were general-bishops, assisted by visitors, of course all laymen, no less than those from whom they derived their authority and by whom, for instance for bad doctrine, they might be removed. The above-mentioned letter sent to Prague, on the appointment of ministers in the Church (1523), contained further details. Other statements made by Luther about that same time, and already quoted, supply what is here lacking; for instance, his ascribing to each member of the congregation the right of judging of doctrine and of humbly correcting the preacher, should he err, even before the whole assembly, according to the Spirit of God which inspires him.[1]

Thus he had relinquished the idea of proceeding by means of the assistance of the Princes and nobles, and had come to place all his hopes in the fruitfulness and productive power of the congregational life.

But here again he met with nothing but disappointment. It was not encouraging to find, that, on the introduction of the new teaching and in the struggle against alleged formalism and holiness-by-works, what Christian spirit previously existed was inclined to take to flight, whilst an unevangelical spirit obtruded itself everywhere. Hence his enlargement of his earlier congregational theory by the scheme for singling out the faithful, i.e. the true Christians, and forming of them a special community.

Just as his belief in the spontaneous formation of a new state of things testified to his abnormal idealism, so this new idea of an assembly within the congregation displays his

[1] Cp. vol. ii., p. 113.

utter lack of any practical spirit of organisation. As to how far this perfecting of his congregational Churches tended to produce a sort of esoteric Church, will be discussed elsewhere (vol. v., xxix., 8).

As his starting-point in this later theory he took the proposition, which he believed could be reconciled with the Gospel, viz. that the Gospel is not for all; it is not intended for the "hard-hearted" who "do not accept it and are not amenable to it," it is not meant for "open sinners, steeped in great vices; even though they may listen to it and not resist it, yet it does not trouble them much"; still less is it for those, "worst of all men, who go so far as to persecute the Gospel." "These three classes have nothing to do with the Gospel, nor do we preach to such as these; I only wish we could go further and punish them, the unmannerly hogs, who prate much of it but all to no purpose, as though it [the Gospel] were a romance of Dietrich of Bern, or some such-like tale. If a man wants to be a pig, let him think of the things which are a pig's. Would that I could exclude such men from the sermons."[1]

In reality, as is evident from passages already quoted and as Luther here again goes on to point out, the Gospel was intended for "simple" consciences, for those who, "though they may at times stumble, are displeased with themselves, feel their malady and would gladly be rid of it, and whose hearts are therefore not hardened. These must be stirred up and drawn to Christ. To none other than these have we ever preached." The latter assertion is not, of course, to be taken quite literally. It is, however, correct that he considered only the true believers as real members of the Church, for these alone, viz. for people who had been touched by the Spirit of God and recognised their sins, was his preaching intended.[2] These too it was whom he desired

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $11^2$, p. 245 f. Church Postils. Sermon for Easter Monday, published in 1523. Order and instruction [how henceforward the sacrament is to be received]. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 197. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 298, where Luther says: "Those who do not believe do not belong to the kingdom of Christ, but to the kingdom of the world."

[2] "Troubled consciences" alone would appreciate the consolation in his chief doctrine, viz. that of Justification, for which reason Melanchthon in the apology of the Augsburg Confession ("Symbol. Bücher $^{10}$," pp. 87, 90, 118, 120, 174) is fond of representing Justification by faith alene under the aspect of a solace and consolation amidst the terrors of conscience caused by the consciousness of sin. Whoever had not experienced such fears could have no real understanding of Justification. Such a view of Justification, K. Holl, a Protestant theologian, remarks had its value while it was still a question of winning over Catholics to the new teaching, since, according to Luther, the Catholic trust in works necessarily led to "despair." But, in the new generation, who had grown up as Lutherans, "consciences were already comforted before ever they experienced any terrors"; nor did Luther make it at all plain how often, i.e. whether "once only or more frequently," it was necessary to experience the consoling power of the Gospel

to unite if possible into an ordered body. Side by side with this he saw in his mind the great congregational Church, termed by him the "masses"; this Church seemed, however, to him, less a Church than a field for missionary labour, for its members were yet to be converted. The idea of a popular Church was, nevertheless, not altogether excluded by the theory of the separate Church of the true believers.

More particularly at Wittenberg he was desirous of seeing this segregation of the "Christians" carried out, quietly and little by little. He prudently abstained from exerting his own influence for its realisation, and preferred to wait for it to develop spontaneously "under the Spirit of God." The idea was, as a matter of fact, far too vague. He also felt that neither he nor the others possessed the necessary spiritual authority for guiding hearts towards this goal, for preserving peace within the newly founded communities, or for defending them against the hostile elements outside. As for his favourite comparison of his theory of the congregation with that in vogue in Apostolic times, it was one which could not stand examination. His congregations lacked everything—the moral foundation, the Spirit from above, independent spiritual authority and able, God-enlightened superiors to act as their organs and centres.

At Leisnig in the Saxon Electorate (cf. vol. ii., p. 113) an attempt to call an ideal evangelical community into existence was made in 1523, the Church property being illegally confiscated by the magistrates and members of the parish, and the ancient right of the neighbouring Cistercian house to appoint the parish-priest being set at nought by the congregation choosing its own pastor; here the inevitable dissensions at once broke out within the community and the whole thing was a failure. The internal confusion to which the congregation would be exposed through the doctrine of private illumination and "apostolic" rights, is clear from the very title of the work which Luther composed for Leisnig: "That a Christian assembly or parish has the right and power to judge of doctrine and to give the call to, and appoint and remove, its pastors," etc.[1]

amidst terrors of conscience in order to arrive at the full assurance of Justification. "Die Rechtfertigungslehre im Lichte der Gesch. des Protestantismus," 1906, p. 14.

[1] "Das eyn Christliche Versamlung odder Gemeyne . . . Macht habe alle Lere zu urteylen." "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 401 ff.; Erl. ed., 22, p. 140 ff.

In spite of the evident impracticability of the scheme, the phantom of the congregational Church engrossed the author of the ecclesiastical schism for about ten years. Nor did he ever cease to cherish the idea of the Church apart. It was this idea which inspired the attacks contained in his sermons upon the multitude of lazy, indolent and unbelieving souls to whom it was useless to preach and who, even after death, were only fit for the flaying-ground because during life they had infected the invisible, living community. He is heedless of what must result, in the towns, villages and families, from any division into Christians and non-Christians, nor does he seem to notice that the system of the Church apart could only produce spiritual pride, hypocrisy and all the errors of subjectivism in those singled out by the Spirit, to say nothing of the obstinacy and wantonness engendered in those who were excluded.

The popular Church, of which it was necessary to make the best, owing to the impracticability of the Church apart, apparently embraced all, yet, within it, according to Luther, the true believers formed an invisible Church, and this in a twofold manner, first, because they were themselves not to be recognised, and, secondly, because the Word and the Sacrament, from which they derived their religious life, concealed a whole treasure of invisible forces.

With such imperfect elements it was, however, impossible to establish a new Church system. A new phase was imminent, towards which everything was gravitating of its own accord; this was the State Church, i.e. the national Church as a State institution, with the sovereign at its head. The various congregational churches formed a visible body frequently impinging on the outward, civil government, and largely dependent on the support of the authorities; hence their gradual evolution into a State Church. The local and national character of the new system paved the way for this development. Luther, whilst at the bottom of his heart anxious to check it—for his ideal was an independent Church—came, under pressure of circumstances, to champion it as the best and only thing. A popular Church or State Church had never been his object, yet he ultimately welcomed the State Church as the best way to meet difficulties; this we shall see more clearly further on. In his efforts to overcome the apathy of the masses he even had

recourse to compulsion by the State, inviting the authorities to force resisters to attend Divine Worship.[1]

Luther should have asked himself whether the moral grandeur and strength which, in spite of its favourable appearance, the congregational Church lacked, would be found in the compulsory State Church. This question he should have been able to answer in the negative. It was a radical misfortune that in all the attempts made to infuse life into the branch torn away by Luther from the universal Catholic Church the secular power never failed to interfere. The State had stood sponsor to the new faith on its first appearance and, whether in Luther's interest or in its own, the State continued to intervene in matters pertaining to the Church. This interweaving of politics with religion failed to insure to the new Church the friendly assistance of the State, but soon brought it into a position of entire subservience—in spite of the protests of the originator of the innovation.

The jurisdiction of the State within the "Church," in the case of the early Lutheran congregations, did not amount to any actual government of the Church by the sovereign. This, in the appalling form it was to assume, was a result of the later Consistories. What, with Luther's consent, first passed into the hands of the secular authorities was the jurisdiction in certain external matters which, according to the earlier Canon Law, really belonged to the Bishop's court. When episcopal authority was abolished the Elector of Saxony assumed this jurisdiction as a sort of bishop *faute-de-mieux*, or, to use Melanchthon's expression, as the

[1] We have indicated in the above our own position with respect to two opposing views recently put forward concerning the development of the early Lutheran Church, viz. P. Drews, "Entsprach das Staatskirchentum dem Ideale Luthers?" (see above, p. 24, n. 4), and H. Hermelink, "Zu Luthers Gedanken über Idealgemeinden und von weltlicher Obrigkeit," in "Zeitschr. für KG.," 29, 1908, p. 267 ff., with epilogue on Drews. See also vol. v., xxx., 2, on State and State Church according to Luther's views and complaints. While Drews emphasises the "congregations of true believers" as "Luther's ideal" (p. 103), Hermelink lays stress on the fact that Luther always believed that in the last instance the Christian authorities would be forced to introduce and see to the uniformity of worship in their lands. The disagreement on so vital an historical question only emphasises anew the want of consistency in Luther and the contradictions contained in his statements. See vol. ii., p. 112, n. 1. Cp. p. 294 ff., and the quotation (from W. Hans): "The contradictions in the theory [Luther's] and between his theory and practice can never be explained."

principal member of the Church ("*membrum præcipuum ecclesiæ*").[1] The jurisdiction in question concerned, above all, matrimonial cases which, according to Luther, belonged altogether to the secular courts, matters of tithes, certain offences against ecclesiastical or secular law and points of Church discipline affecting public order. Luther had declared that the Church possessed no power to govern, that the only object for which it existed was to make men pious by means of the Word, that the secular authority was the only one able to make laws and formally to claim obedience "whether it does right or wrong."[2] Hence the State in assuming jurisdiction in the above matters was doing nobody any injustice, was merely exercising its right, whilst the authority of which it made use was not "ecclesiastical," but merely the common law exercised for the purpose of preserving "sound doctrine" and the "true Church."[3]

The next step was the appointment of ecclesiastical superintendents by the sovereign and, either through these or without them, the nomination of pastors by the State, the removal of unqualified teachers, the convening of ecclesiastical synods or "consultations," the carrying out of Visitations and the drawing up of Church regulations. Here again no objection on the point of principle was raised by Luther, partly because the power of the keys, according to him, included no coercive authority, partly because the idea of the "*membrum præcipuum ecclesiæ*" was elastic enough to permit of such encroachments on the part of the ruler.[4] In the Protestant Canon Law, compiled by R. Sohm, all the above is described, under appeal to Luther, as coming under the jurisdiction of the State, the Church being "with-

[1] Cp. Melanchthon's tract "*De potestate papæ*" added to the Schmalkalden Articles in "Die symbolischen Bücher," [10] 1907, ed. Müller-Kolde, p. 339: "*Imprimis autem oportet præcipua membra ecclesiæ, reges et principes, consulere ecclesiæ. . . . Prima enim cura regum esse debet, ut ornent gloriam Dei.*" Above all, he says, referring to the Papacy, they must not make use of their power "*ad confirmandam idolatriam et cetera infinita flagitia et ad faciendas cædes sanctorum.*"

[2] R. Sohm, "Kirchenrecht," 1, 1892, p. 561, who appeals to passages in Luther's "Von guten Wercken," 1520, "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 259 ff.; Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 198 f. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 299.

[3] Sohm, *ibid.*, p. 579.

[4] Melanchthon even describes it as the first duty of the principal member of the Church: "*curare, ut errores tollantur et conscientiæ sanentur.*" "Symbolische Bücher," *ibid.*

out jurisdiction in the legal sense" and its business being "merely the ministry of the Word."[1]

The introduction of the Consistories in 1539 was a result of the idea expressed by Justus Jonas in his memorandum, viz. that if the Church possesses no legal power of coercion for the maintenance of order, she is fatally doomed to perish. To many the growing corruption made an imitation of "episcopal jurisdiction in the Catholic style," such as Melanchthon desiderated, appear a real need.[2] In the event the advice of Jonas was followed, jurisdiction being conferred on the Consistories directly by the ruler of the land. After a little hesitation Luther gave his sanction to the new institution, seeing that, though appointed by the sovereign, it was a mere spiritual tribunal of the Church. The Consistories, more particularly after his death, though retaining the name of ecclesiastical courts gradually became a department of the civil judicature, a good expression of the complete subservience of Church to State.

"The setting up of the civil government of the Church was achieved," remarks Sohm, by an arrangement really "in entire opposition to the ideas of the Reformation."[3]

"The lack of system in Luther's mode of thought is perhaps nowhere so apparent as in his views on the authorities and their demeanour towards religion."[4] The want of unity and sequence in his teaching becomes even more apparent when we listen to the very diverse opinions of Protestant scholars on the subject. It is no fault of the historian's if the picture presented by the statements of Luther and his commentators shows very blurred outlines.

"The civil government of the Church," writes Heinrich Böhmer, in "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung"—speaking from his own standpoint—"in so far as it actually represents a 'government,' is utterly at variance with Luther's own principles in matters of religion. Neither can it be brought into direct historical connection with the Reformation. . . . The so-called congregational principle is really the only one which agrees with Luther's religious ideal, according to which the decision upon all ecclesiastical matters is to be regarded as the right of each individual congregation. . . . It is, however, perfectly true that the attempts to reorganise the ecclesiastical

[1] Sohm, "Kirchenrecht," I, 1892, p. 579.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 615, where the passages from Jonas's writings are given.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 630, 618; for further details on the Consistories and Luther's relations to them, see our vol. v., xxx., 3; cp. xxxv., 2.

[4] Wilhelm Hans, a Protestant theologian, quoted in our vol. ii., p. 312.

constitution on the basis of this idea were a complete failure. Neither at Wittenberg, nor at Allstedt, nor at Orlamünde were the communities from a moral point of view sufficiently ripe."[1]

The civil government of the Church is also in disagreement with Luther's conception of the secular power as expressed in some chief passages of his work "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt," (1523). According to Erich Brandenburg's concise summary, Luther shows in this work, that "the task of the State and of society is entirely secular; it is not their duty to make men pious. There is no such thing as a Christian State; society and the State were called into being by God on account of the wicked."[2] Brandenburg also quotes later statements made by Luther concerning the secular authorities, and infers, "that neither the civil government of the Church in the sense accepted at a later date, nor the quasi-episcopate of the sovereign, is really compatible with such views."[3]

It is true that in his Commentary on the Gospel of St. John (1537–1538), in his annoyance at his unfortunate experiences of State encroachments, Luther declares, that "the two governments should not be intermingled to the end of the world, as was the case with the Jewish nation in Old Testament times, but must remain divided and apart, in order that the pure Gospel and the true faith may be preserved, for the Kingdom of Christ and the secular government are two very different things."[4] He realises, however, the futility of his exhortations: "You will see that the devil will mingle them together again . . . the sword of the Spirit and the secular sword. . . . Our squires, the nobles and the Princes, who now go about equipped with authority and desire to teach the preachers what they are to preach and to force the people to the sacrament according to their pleasure, will cause us much injury: for it is necessary 'to render obedience to the worldly authorities,' hence 'what we wish, that you must do,' and thus the secular and spiritual government becomes a single establishment."[5]

Brandenburg, for his part, is of opinion that "the civil government of the Church had come about in opposition to Luther's wishes, but had to be endured like other forms of injustice. . . . Luther reproached himself with strengthening the tyrants by his preaching, with throwing open doors and windows to them. But with the unworldly idealism peculiar to him, he thereupon replied defiantly: 'What do I care? If, on account of the tyrants, we are to omit the teaching which is so essential a

[1] First edition, p. 127. In the second edition the passage commencing with the words "The so-called" has been altered.

[2] "Luthers Anschauung vom Staate und der Gesellschaft" ("Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch."), 1901, p. 25. Elsewhere Luther speaks otherwise. We must remember that in the above writing he has in mind chiefly the Catholic authorities who were opposing the new Evangel.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 46, p. 183.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

matter, then we should have been forced long since to relinquish the whole Evangel.' "[1]

On the other hand another Protestant theologian, H. Hermelink, who supports the opposite view, viz. that Luther was a staunch upholder of the supremacy of the authorities in matters ecclesiastic, adduces plentiful quotations from Luther's writings in which the latter, even from the early days of his struggle, declares that the authorities have their say in spiritual matters, that it is their duty to provide for uniformity of teaching in each locality and to supervise Christian worship. He admits, however, that Luther set certain " bounds to the ecclesiastical rights of the authorities."[2]

These statements in favour of the authorities cannot be disallowed. They arose partly from Luther's efforts to advance his party with the help of the worldly magnates, partly, as will appear immediately, from the material difficulties of the Lutheran congregations, due to the confiscation of Church property by the secular power.

In any case it was unexpectedly that Luther found himself confronted with all the above problems. When their immediate solution became the most urgent task for the new faith, Luther's principles were still far from presenting any well-defined line of action. " To these, and similar questions," remarks Wilhelm Maurenbrecher, the Protestant historian of the Reformation, " Luther had given no sufficient answer ; it would even seem as though he had not considered them at all carefully." Among the questions was, according to Maurenbrecher, the fundamental one : " Who is to decide whether this or that person belongs to the congregation ? " If the congregation, where does the Church come in ? for, " after all, the congregation is not the Church."[3] The very idea of the Church had still to be determined.[4]

### *Confiscation of Church Property.*

In the Saxon Electorate, the home of the religious innovation, it had become imperatively necessary that the parishes which sided with Luther should be set in order by a strong hand, first, and principally, in the matter of the use to which the Church lands were to be put. In these territories, where the civil government of the Church first obtained, it arose through the robbing and plundering of the churches.

" The parsonages all over the country lie desolate," Luther

[1] Brandenburg, p. 24, from " Werke," Erl. ed., 39, p. 257. Commentary on Psalm lxxxii.

[2] Zeitschr. für KG.," 29, 1908, p. 267 ff., 479 ff.

[3] " Studien und Skizzen zur Gesch. der Reformationszeit," 1874, p. 344 f.

[4] On the development of Luther's idea of the Church, see vol. vi., xxxviii., 3 and 4. On the shaping of the relations between Church and State by Luther, see vol. v., xxxv., 2.

wrote to the Elector Johann of Saxony on October 31, 1525, "no one gives anything, or pays anything. . . . The common people pay no attention to either preacher or parson, so that unless some bold step be taken and the pastors and preachers receive State aid from your Electoral Highness, there will shortly be neither parsonages, nor schools, nor scholars, so that the Word of God and His worship will perish. Your Electoral Highness must therefore continue to devote yourself to God's service and act as His faithful tool."[1]

Not long afterwards Luther strongly advises the Elector not only to see to the material condition of the parsonages, but also to examine by means of visitors the fitness of the parsons for their office, "in order that the people may be well served in the Evangel and may contribute to his [the parson's] support."[2]

The Order for Visitations (1527), which Luther looked over and which practically had his approval, was intended in the first place to better financially the condition of the parishes. Hand in hand with this, however, went supervision of the preaching by the State and the repression by force of whatever Catholic elements still survived.[3] The Electoral Visitors here and there found the utmost indifference towards the new faith prevailing among the people, whose interests were all material. They finally proposed that the Elector should provide for the support of the parsons and assume the right of appointing and removing all the clergy.

Luther himself had written as early as 1526: "The complaints of the parsons almost everywhere are beyond measure great. The peasants refuse to give anything at all, and there is such ingratitude amongst the people for the Holy Word of God that there can be no doubt a great judgment of God is imminent. . . . It is the fault of the authorities that the young receive no education and that the land is filled with wild, dissolute folk, so that not only God's command but our common distress compel us to take some measures."[4]

"Common distress" was, in point of fact, compelling recourse

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 331 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 259).

[2] On November 30, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 337 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 277 ff.).

[3] C. A. Burkhardt, "Gesch. der sächsischen Kirchen- und Schulvisitation von 1524 bis 1545," 1879, p. 16.

[4] To Johann, Elector of Saxony, November 22, 1526, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 386 "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 406).

to the authorities who had confiscated the property of the Church ; i.e. the heads of the various parishes or the Electoral Court. The magistrates had laid hands upon the smaller benefices, which, as a matter of fact, were for the most part in their own gift or in that of the families of distinction, whilst in case of dispute the Elector himself had intervened. The best of the plunder naturally went to the Ruler of the land.

Luther addressed the Elector as follows : " Now that an end has been made of the Papal and ecclesiastical tyranny throughout your Highness's dominions, and now that all the religious houses and endowments have come into the power of your Electoral Highness as the supreme head, this involves the duty and burden of setting this matter in order, since no one else has taken it up, nor has a right to do so."[1]—Nor was Luther backward in pointing out to the Court, when obliged to complain of the meagre support accorded to the churches, the great service he had done in enriching it : " Has the Prince ever suffered any loss through us ? " he asks a person of influence with the Elector in 1520. " Have we not, on the contrary, brought him much gain ? Can it be considered an insignificant matter, that not only your souls have been saved by the Evangel, but that also considerable wealth, in the shape of property, has begun to flow into the Prince's coffers, a source of revenue which is still daily on the increase ? "[2]

The appropriation of property by the Elector as Ruler of the land necessarily entailed far-reaching obligations with regard to the churches.

Hence, when, on November 22, 1526, Luther represented to the sovereign the financial distress of the pastors, he also told him, that a just ruler ought to prevail upon his subjects to support the schools, pulpits and parsonages.[3] Johann, in his reply, when agreeing to intervene for the better ordering of the churches, likewise appeals to his rights as sovereign of the country : " Because we judge, and are of opinion, that it beseems us as Ruler to attend to them."[4]

Luther's invitation to the Princes to effect by force a reformation of the ecclesiastical order had already thrown wide open the doors to princely aggression.

" The secular power," Luther had said, " has become a member of the Christian body, and though its work is of the body, yet it belongs to the spiritual estate. Therefore its work shall go forward without let or hindrance amongst all the members of the whole body." The Christian secular authority shall exercise its office in all freedom, if necessary even against Pope, bishop and priest, for ecclesiastical law is nothing but a fond invention of Roman presumption.[5]

[1] To the Elector Johann in the letter quoted above.
[2] To Spalatin, on March 19, 1520 (" Briefwechsel," 2, p. 263).
[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 386 (" Briefwechsel," 5, p. 406).
[4] Burkhardt, " Luthers Briefwechsel," p. 114.
[5] In the work " An den christlichen Adel " of 1520, " Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 409 ; Erl. ed., 21, p. 285. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 296.

If it was the duty of the rulers to intervene on behalf of the general public needs of Christendom, how much more were they bound to provide for the proper standing and pure doctrine of the pastors. It is they who must assist in bringing about a "real, free Council," since the Pope, whose duty it was to convene it, neglected to do so; "this no one can do so effectively as the secular powers, particularly now that they have become fellow-Christians, fellow-priests and fellow-clergymen, sharing our power in all things; their office and work, which they have from God over all men, must be allowed free course wherever needful and wholesome."[1]

Luther was wide-awake to the fact, and reckoned upon it, that the gain to be derived from the rich ecclesiastical property would act as a powerful incentive with those in power to induce them to open their lands to the innovations. What ruler would not be tempted by the prospect of coming so easily into possession of the Church's wealth, that fabulous patrimony accumulated from the gifts previous ages had made on behalf of the poor, of the service of the altar, of the clergy and the churches? They heard Luther declare that he was going to tear Catholic hearts away from "monasteries and clerical mummery"; they also heard him add: "When they are gone and the churches and convents lie desolate and forsaken, then the rulers of the land may do with them what they please. What care we for wood and stone if once we have captured the hearts?"[2] The taking over of the Church property by the rulers was, according to him, simply the just and natural result of the preaching of the Evangel. This was the light in which he wished the very unspiritual procedure of confiscation to be regarded.

He frequently insisted very urgently that the nobles and unauthorised laymen were not to seize upon the church buildings, revenues and real property. He was aware of the danger of countenancing private interference, and preferred to see the expropriation carried out by the power of the State and according to law. In this wise he hoped that the property seized might still, to some extent, be employed in accordance with its original purpose, though, as was inevitable, he was greatly disappointed in this hope. It is spiritual

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 413=290.

[2] To the Elector Frederick and Duke Johann of Saxony, July, 1524, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 255 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 372).

property, he repeats frequently, bestowed for a spiritual purpose, and therefore, even after the departure of its former occupant, it must be used for the salvation of souls in accordance with the Evangel. To the Elector Johann, for instance, he writes: The parsonages must be repaired out of the revenues of the monasteries, "because such property cannot profit your Electoral Highness's Exchequer, for it was dedicated to God's service and therefore must be devoted primarily to this object. Whatever is left after this, your Electoral Highness may make use of for the needs of the land, or for the poor."[1]

His demands were, however, very inadequately complied with. If Luther really anticipated their fulfilment, he was certainly very ignorant of the ways of the world. Who was to prevent the Princes from seizing upon the Church lands with greedy hands so soon as they stood vacant, and employing them for their own purposes, or to enrich the nobles? Even where everything was done in an orderly manner, who could prevent ever-impecunious Sovereigns from making use of the revenues for State purposes and from allotting the first place among the "needs of the land" of which we just heard Luther speak, to their own everyday requirements?

Luther's subsequent experiences drew from him such words as the following: "This robbing of the monasteries"—he wrote to Spalatin, who was still connected with the Court of the new Elector Johann (since 1525), concerning the condition of things in the Saxon Electorate—"is a very serious matter, which worries me greatly. I have set my face against it for a long while past. Not content with this, when the Prince was stopping here I actually forced my way into his chamber, in spite of the resistance I met with, in order to make representations to him privately." He goes on to complain that there was little hope of redress so long as certain selfish intrigues were being carried on in the vicinity of the sovereign. Indeed, he does not anticipate much help from this Elector Johann, because he lacks his father's firmness, and is much too ready to listen to anyone. "A Prince must know how to be angry, a King must be something of a tyrant; this the world demands." As things are, however, we are imposed upon in all sorts of ways for "the sake of the spoils"; "smoke, fumes and fables" are made to serve, and we do not even know who are at work behind the scenes; at any rate they are hostile to the Evangel and were its foes even in the time of the

[1] To the Elector Johann, November 22, 1526, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 386 f. ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 406).

pious Elector. "Now that they have enriched themselves, they laugh and exult over the fact that it is possible in the name of the Evangel to enjoy all sorts of evangelical freedom, and at the same time to be the Evangel's worst enemy. This is bitter to me, more bitter than gall." "I shall have to issue a public admonition to the Prince in order to insist upon some other administration of the religious houses; perhaps then I shall be able to shame those fellows. . . . I hate Satan's rage, malice and ambushes, everywhere, in all matters, and unceasingly, and it gives me pleasure to thwart him and injure him wherever I can."[1]

Thus the consequences were more serious than the ex-monk in his ignorance of the ways of the world had anticipated. "Satan," on whose shoulders he lays the blame, was not to be so easily expelled. The worst acts of violence perpetrated in the name of the Word of God were the result of the lust for wealth which he had unchained.

"How heavily the negligence of our Court presses upon me," he sighs in the last years of his life. Much is undertaken presumptuously, and then, after a while, we are left stranded in the mire; they do nothing themselves, and we are left to our fate. But I intend to pour my grievous complaints into the ears of Dr. Pontanus and the Prince himself as soon as I get a chance. I have learnt, to my great annoyance, that the nobles are governing in the Prince's name.[2]

A few days after the letter to Spalatin, quoted above, in another letter to him, he gives vent to his thoughts on the marriage questions arising within the domain of the new faith.

### *Secularisation of the Matrimonial Courts. Against the Lawyers.*

The secularisation of the marriage courts appears as a very characteristic subject amongst the questions of jurisdiction arising between State and Church, side by side with the secularisation of Church property. The secularising of these courts was the logical consequence of Luther's secularising of matrimony, which he regarded—to forestall his later statements[3]—"as an outward, secular matter, subject to the authorities, like food and clothing, house and

[1] To Spalatin at Altenburg, January 1, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 2 ff. Spalatin had resigned the Court Chaplaincy on the death of the Elector Frederick and become pastor of Altenburg. From this time Luther's letters to him assume a different character, the consideration for the Court and the desire to work on it through Spalatin being no longer apparent. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 23.

[2] To Amsdorf, January 13, 1543, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 532.

[3] See below, xvii., 5, and vol. iv., xxii., 5.

land."[1] According to the Confession of Augsburg at the very most it was a sacrament only in the same way that the authority of the magistrates appointed by God was a sacrament.[2] The codicil to the Articles of Schmalkalden required, that the "magistrates shall establish special marriage courts," because Canon Law "contains pitfalls for conscience."[3]

As the Church had formerly been the sole authority on questions relating to marriage, and as the custom of referring such matters to her was deeply rooted in the life of the German people, Luther at the outset consented to take this into account and to leave the decision to his preachers; the result of this was, however, that he found himself overwhelmed amidst his other labours by a mass of unpleasant and uncongenial work and was accordingly soon moved to throw the whole burden on the State and the secular lawyers, though here again he met with distressing experiences.

He wrote to Spalatin in 1527: "We have been plagued by so many questions concerning marriage, owing to the connivance of the devil, that we have decided to leave this profane business to the profane courts. Formerly I was stupid enough to expect from mankind something more than mere humanity, and to fancy that they could be directed by the Evangel. Now, facts have shown that they despise the Evangel and insist on being compelled by the law and the sword." He shows himself very much annoyed in this letter at the position taken up by the jurists with their "law" concerning those marriages which took place contrary to the will of the parents. The lawyers of the Wittenberg Faculty agreed with the older Church in recognising the validity of such unions. Luther, on the other hand, ostensibly on biblical grounds, wished them to be held as null, because duty to the public and the respect due to parents required it. In practice, however, he soon became aware how precarious was this position. "The Gospel teaches," he explains to Spalatin, "that the father must be ready to give his consent when his son asks what is lawful, and that the son must obey his father; on both

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 205; Erl. ed., 23, p. 93. "Von Ehesachen," 1530.

[2] "Symbol. Bücher," [10] ed. Müller-Kolde, p. 204, art. 13.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

sides there must be good-will; this holds good with the pious. But when godless parents hear that the Gospel confirms their authority, they become tyrannical [and refuse to consent to their children's marriage]. The children, on the other hand, learn that, according to the law of Pope and Emperor, they have the necessary permission, and so they abuse this liberty and despise their parents. Both sides are in the wrong and numerous examples of the same abound."[1]

In the case of such dissensions between parents and children, he says in an instruction to Spalatin which was printed later, the son "must be sent to the profane, i.e. Imperial Courts of Justice, under which we live in the flesh, and thus you will be relieved of the burden." Preachers, according to him, as "evangelists," have nothing to do with legal questions, but merely with peaceable matters; "where there is strife and dissension the Kaiser's tribunal [the secular courts] must decide. . . . Should the son get no redress from the secular court, then there is nothing for him but to submit to his father's tyranny."[2]

Naturally neither Luther nor the parties concerned found much satisfaction in such expedients. The handing over of the marriage questions to the State was to prove a source of endless and increasing trouble and vexation to Luther in the ensuing years, particularly in connection with the "secret" marriages just referred to. Luther even appealed from the then practice of the lawyers to the law of the old Roman Empire, which exaggerated the paternal rights to the extent of making the children's marriages altogether dependent on the will of the parents. In the letter to Spalatin, printed in the Wittenberg edition of Luther's German works, we find the following marginal note which expresses Luther's opinion: "The old Imperial and Christian laws decree and ordain that children shall marry with the knowledge, consent and advice of their parents, and this the natural law also teaches. But the Pope, like the tyrant and Antichrist he is, has determined to be the only judge in questions of marriage and has abolished the obedience due by children to their parents."[3] The truth is, that Canon Law, whilst

[1] On January 7, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 6. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.
[3] "Werke," Wittenberg ed., 9, p. 244. Enders, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 6, p. 8, n. 1.

strongly urging both sons and daughters to obey and respect their parents, nevertheless recognised as valid a marriage contract when concluded under conditions otherwise lawful, and this because it saw no reason for depriving the contracting parties of the freedom which was theirs by the natural law.

Luther, greatly incensed by the opposition of the lawyers, at length, in a sermon preached in 1544, launched forth the most solemn condemnation possible of the so-called secret unions contracted without the paternal consent. He declared: "I, Dr. Martinus, command in the name of the Lord our God, that no one shall enter into a secret engagement and then, after the event, seek the parents' ratification . . . and, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I condemn to the abyss of hell all those who assist in furthering such devil's work as secret engagements. Amen."[1]

In the same way he boasted to the Elector, that the jurists had "wanted to play havoc" with his churches "with their annoying, damnable suits which, however, I have resolved to expel from my churches as damnable and accursed to-day and for all eternity." The principal motive for his action was the "Divine command" he had received "to preach the observance of the Fourth Commandment in these matters."[2]

What Luther, however, was most sensitive to was that some of the Wittenberg lawyers, conformably with the traditional code, declared the marriages of priests, and consequently his own, to be invalid in law, and the children of such unions to be incapable of inheriting. He keenly felt the blow which was thus directed against himself and his children. His displeasure he gave vent to in some drastic utterances. If what the lawyers say is correct, he continues in the writing above referred to addressed to the Elector, "then I should also be obliged to forsake the Evangel and crawl back into the frock [the religious habit] in the devil's name, by power and virtue of both ecclesiastical and secular law. Then Your Electoral Highness would have to have my head chopped off, dealing likewise with all those who have married nuns, as the Emperor Jovian decreed more than a thousand years ago" [and as the law still stood in the codes then in use].

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 240. "Table-Talk."
[2] On January 18, 1545, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 716 f.

Thoughts such as these, on the reprobation of his union with Bora by the law of the Church and of the Christian Roman Empire, stood in glaring contrast to the pleasant moods of domestic life to which he so gladly gave himself up. He sought to find solace from his public cares and conflicts in his family circle, and some compensation for the troubles which the great ones of the earth caused him in the domestic delights in which he would have wished all other fallen priests to share. He succeeded, to an extent which appeared by no means enviable to those who followed a different ideal, in forgetting his priestly state and its demands. In one of the letters just mentioned he writes as a father to Spalatin, who also had had recourse to marriage: "May you live happily in the Lord with your rib [i.e. your wife]. My little Hans sends you greetings; he is now in the month of teething and is beginning to lisp; it is delightful to see how he will leave no one in peace about him. My Katey also sends you her best wishes, above all for a little Spalatin, to teach you what she boasts of having learnt from her little Hans, i.e. the crown and joy of wedded life, which the Pope and his world were not worthy of."[1]

What Canon Law said of the high calling of the priest and religious and of the depth of the fall of those who proved untrue to it, no longer made the slightest impression on him. It would have been in vain had a St. Jerome of olden days, a mediæval St. Bernard or a Geiler of Kaysersberg championed the cause of Canon Law against Luther and his nun in the glowing language they knew so well how to use. Luther's own words quoted above concerning the death penalty decreed by Jovian the Christian Emperor against anyone sacrilegiously violating a nun, illuminate as with a lightning flash the antagonism between antiquity and Luther's doings.

He asserts himself proudly because he considers his heavenly calling to expound the new Evangel, and his Divine mission, had been questioned by the lawyers who represented the authority of the State. When, in defiance of their objections against the legitimacy of his family, he drafted his celebrated will, he was careful to inform them that, for its validity, he has no need of them or of a notary; he was "Dr. Martinus Luther, God's Notary

[1] On January 1, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 4.

and Witness to His Gospel," and was "well known in heaven, on earth and in hell"; that "God had entrusted him with the Gospel of His Dear Son and had made him faithful and true to it," for which reason, "in spite of the fury of all the devils," many "in the world regarded him as a teacher of truth."[1]

### 3. The Question of the Religious War; Luther's Vacillating Attitude. The League of Schmalkalden, 1531

After the Diet of Augsburg, Luther, as we have shown (vol. ii., pp. 391, 395 f.), proclaimed the war of religion much more openly than ever before. His writings, "Auff das vermeint Keiserlich Edict" and "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen," bear witness to this. The proceedings taken by the Empire on the ground of the resolutions of Worms, and the attitude of the Catholic Princes and Estates, appeared to him merely a plot, a shameful artifice on the part of the "blood-hounds" who opposed him.

In his writing against the Assassin, i.e. Duke George of Saxony, he expounds his politico-religious standpoint in a way which became his rule for the future. Cain and Abel, the devil and the righteous, stand face to face. "The world belongs either to the devil or to the Children of God. The devil's realm conceals a murderer and blood-hound, Abel, a pious and peaceable heart." Abel stands for the Lutherans, Cain and the devil for the Papists. It is a "veracious opinion, founded on Scripture and proved by the fruits of the Papists, that they are ever on the watch and lie in wait day and night to destroy us and root us out."[2] "If the Emperor or the authorities purpose to make war on God [i.e. Luther's Evangel], then no one must obey them." In this case everyone must resist, for it is no "disobedience, rebellion or contumacy to refuse to obey and assist in shedding innocent blood."[3]

Opposition and violent resistance to the lawful authority of the empire and its legitimate action is here justified by the argument that to fight for the Evangel is no revolt.

[1] Will of January 6, 1542, "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. 2; "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 422.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 469; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 126. Dating from the commencement of 1531.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 447=111.

The defiant resolve to proceed to any extreme regardless of others or of the public weal, finds its strongest expression in Luther's words during and after the Diet of Augsburg: "Not one hair's breadth will I yield to the foe," he wrote from the fortress of Coburg, with a hint at the wavering attitude of Melanchthon and Jonas. This it was which led up to the statement already quoted: "If war is to come, let it come." "God has delivered them up to be slaughtered."[1]

*Luther on Armed Resistance, until* 1530.

If we glance at Luther's former attitude towards open resistance, we find that it would be unjust to say that he preferred religious war to peaceful propaganda. He perceived the danger which it involved. At an earlier period he several times had occasion to intervene when warring elements threatened to estrange the German Princes. We find statements of his where he speaks against armed resistance and points out (to use his later words) what a "blot upon our teaching" a "breach or disturbance of the peace of the land would be."[2] There is no question that such utterances preponderate with him until 1530. From the very first years of his public career he was anxious to impress on all, particularly on his own Sovereign, that the Word alone must work all; he eliminates as far as possible every prospect of a struggle with the Emperor or the other rulers, which was what the Elector really dreaded. He also frequently expounds theoretically, more particularly in his booklet "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt" (1523), the duty of Christians not to resist the authorities, because the Kingdom of God means yielding, humility and submission; every true believer must even allow himself to be "fleeced and oppressed"; he must indeed confess the evangelical faith, but be willing to "suffer" under an authority hostile to the faith (cp. vol. ii., p. 229 f.). When occasion offered he was ready to quote numerous passages from Holy Scripture in order to show that violent revolt and armed intervention on behalf of the Gospel are forbidden, and that the German Princes had nothing to fear from him in this regard.

[1] See vol. ii., p. 391.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 332 *seq.* "Table-Talk." Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 133 of the year 1540.

None the less, his enterprise was visibly drifting towards the employment of force and towards war.

How deeply he felt the premonition of civil war is plain, for instance, from the following:

"There will be no lack of breaches of the peace, and of war only too much," he wrote in 1528 to the Elector Johann.[1] He and Melanchthon together also wrote in the same strain to the Crown-Prince of Saxony, Johann Frederick, in 1528; "Time will bring enough fighting with it which it will be impossible to avoid, so that we should be grateful to accept peace where we are able."[2] As early as 1522 he had given to the Elector Frederick one of his reasons for leaving the Wartburg and returning to Wittenberg: "I am much afraid and troubled because I am, alas, convinced that there will be a great revolt in the German lands, by which God will chastise the nation." The Evangel was well received by the common people, but some were desirous of extinguishing the light by force. And yet "not only the spiritual, but also the secular power, must yield to the Evangel, whether cheerfully or otherwise, as all the accounts contained in the Bible sufficiently show. . . . I am only concerned lest the revolt should begin with the Lords, and, like a national calamity, engulf the priesthood."[3]

Nevertheless he is determined to be of good cheer; even should the war ensue, his conscience is "pure, guiltless and untroubled, whereas the consciences of the Papists are guilty, anxious and unclean." "Therefore let things take their course and do their worst, whether it be war or rebellion according as God's anger decrees."[4]

This gives redoubled weight to his determination to press forward relentlessly. "Let justice prevail even though the whole world should be reduced to ruin. For I say throw peace into the nethermost hell if it is to be purchased at the price of harm to the Evangel and to the faith."[5]

It has been admitted on the Protestant side that "Luther adhered to this view throughout his life, viz.: that his doctrine must be preached even though it should lead to the destruction

[1] On May 8, 1528, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 5 ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 274).

[2] On same date, *ibid.*, p. 6 ("Briefwechsel," *ibid.*).

[3] On March 7, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 111 f. ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 298).

[4] In the "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," 1531, "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 279; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 8. It is true that this and the following statement belong to the period subsequent to the Diet of Augsburg, but they also throw light on the earlier period.

[5] In a Latin memorandum which Enders with some probability assigns to the latter half of August, 1531, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 76: "*Fiat iustitia et pereat mundus; pacem enim ad ima tartara relegandam esse dico, quæ cum evangelii iactura redimitur.*" There are no grounds for doubting Luther's authorship, but the original was probably written in German.

of all."[1] In confirmation of this, another passage taken from Luther's writings is quoted : " It has been said that if the Pope falls Germany will perish, be utterly wrecked and ruined ; but how can I help that ? I cannot save it ; whose fault is it ? Ah, they say, if Luther had not come and preached, the Papacy would still be on its legs and we should be at peace. I cannot help that."[2]

When the same author urges in Luther's defence that, " he was not really indifferent to the evil consequences of his actions in ecclesiastical and political matters,"[3] we naturally ask whether the author of the schism did not at times feel bitterly his heavy responsibility for these results, and whether he should not have exerted himself in every possible way to ward off the " evil consequences." His own admissions, to be given elsewhere (see vol. v., xxxii.), concerning his inward struggles, disclose how frequently he was troubled with such reproaches and what difficulty he had in ridding himself of them.

To the inflammatory invitations already given we may subjoin a few others.

" It were better," Luther says in his Church-postils, " that all the churches and foundations throughout the land were uprooted and burnt to powder—and the sin would be less even though done out of mere wantonness—than that a single soul should be seduced and corrupted by this [Papistical] error."[4] And, further on : " Here you see why the lightning commonly strikes the churches rather than any other buildings, viz. : because God is more hostile to them than to any others, because in no den of robbers, no house of ill-fame is there such sin, such blasphemy against God, such murder of the soul and destruction of the Church committed as in these houses " [i.e. in the churches where the Catholic worship obtained].[5] Elsewhere, at an earlier date he had said : " Would it be astonishing if the Princes, the nobles and the laity were to hit Pope, bishop, priest and monk on the head and drive them out of the land ? It has never before been heard of in Christendom, and it is abominable to hear now, that the Christian people should openly be commanded to deny the truth."[6]—Besides these, we have the fiery words he flung among the people : " Where the ecclesiastical Estate does not proceed in the way of faith and charity [according to the Evangel], my wish is not merely that my doctrine should interfere with the monasteries and foundations, but that they were reduced to one great heap of ashes."[7]—In fine : " A grand destruction of all the monasteries and foundations would

[1] W. Walther, " Luthers Waffen," 1886, p. 158, and his " Für Luther," 1906, p. 246 ff., 278 ff.

[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 33, p. 606 ; Erl. ed., 48, p. 342, in the Exposition of the Gospel of St. John, 1530–1532. Cp. Walther, *ibid.*

[3] Walther, *ibid.*, p. 170.

[4] " Werke," Erl. ed., $7^2$, p. 222. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 224.

[6] " Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 621 ; Erl. ed., $24^2$, p. 46, in the work " Widder die Bullen des Endchrists," 1520.

[7] " Werke," Erl. ed., $7^2$, p. 330 in the " Kirchenpostille."

be the best reformation, for they are of no earthly use to Christendom and might well be spared. . . . What is useless and unnecessary and yet does such untold mischief, and to boot is beyond reformation, had much better be exterminated."[1] The word here rendered as "destruction" is one of which Luther frequently makes use to denote violent annihilation, for instance, of the devastation of Jerusalem and its Temple, nor can we well explain it away in the above connection; he certainly never pictured to himself the "grand destruction of all the monasteries and foundations" otherwise than as a general reduction to ruins. The excuse brought forward in modern times in extenuation of Luther is a very strange one, viz.: that, when giving vent to such expressions, he frequently added the qualifying clause "*if* the Catholics do not change their opinions," then violence will befall them; hence only in the event of their final refusal to accept the new teaching was the destruction so vividly described to overtake them! Presumably his contemporaries should have shown themselves grateful for this saving clause. The mitigation conveyed by the clause in question in reality amounted to this: Only if the whole world becomes Lutheran will it be saved from destruction.[2]

It is psychologically worth noticing that Luther, in his zeal, seems never to have perceived that the argument might just as well be turned against himself. The Emperor and the Catholic powers of the Empire, with at least as much show of reason, might have urged as he did, that no power, without being doomed to "destruction" and to being "burnt to ashes," could stand against the Gospel. The Gospel which they defended was that handed down by the Church, whereas Luther's Evangel, to mention only one point, was novel and hitherto unheard of by theologians and faithful laity alike. On the one occasion when this thought occurred to him, he had the following excuse ready: We are sure of our faith, hence we may and must demand that everything yield to it; the Emperor and his party on the other hand have no such assurance and can never reach it. "We know that the Emperor is not and cannot be certain of it, because we know that he errs and seeks to oppose the Evangel. We are not obliged to believe that he is certain because he does not act

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 7², p. 121, "Kirchenpostille."

[2] An earlier explanation of Luther's as to the way in which he understood destruction only shows that then, in 1522, he was averse to the carrying out of such a project: "This destruction and annihilation I would not have understood as meaning the use of violence and the sword. For they are not worthy of such chastisement nor would anything be gained by it—but as Daniel viii. teaches: Antichrist shall be destroyed without hands, when everyone teaches, speaks and holds God's Word against him. . . . This is a true Christian destruction." "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 140; Erl. ed., 28, p. 178. Even H. Preuss recognises in his "Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist," p. 115, that, in Luther's replies to Alveld and in his epitome of Silvester Prierias, "there smoulders such anger as shows that recourse to arms was imminent." Cp. passages from Luther's writings referred to in vol. ii., p. 190, n. 3.

in accordance with God's Word, whereas we on the other hand do; for it is his bounden duty to recognise God's Word!" Otherwise, Luther adds, "every murderer and adulterer might also plead: 'I am right, therefore you must approve my act because I am certain I am in the right.'"[1]—"It was with arguments like these that the Protestant Estates were to justify their overthrow of the ancient faith and worship, and to demonstrate the wickedness of the Emperor's efforts to preserve the faith and worship of his fathers."[2]

Of the various memoranda which Luther had to draw up for his Sovereign on the question of armed resistance, that of February 8, 1523, prepared for the Elector Frederick, must be mentioned first.[3] In this the Prince's attention is drawn to the fact, that publicly he had hitherto preserved an attitude of neutrality concerning religious questions, and had merely given out that, as a layman, he was waiting for the triumph of the truth. Hence it was necessary that he should declare himself for the justice of Luther's cause if he intended to abandon his attitude of submission to the Imperial authority. In that case he might have recourse to arms in the character of a stranger who comes to the rescue, but not as a sovereign of the Empire. Further, "he must do this only at the call of a singular spirit and faith, short of which he must give way to the sword of the higher power and die with his Christians."[4] Should he, however, be attacked, not by the Emperor, but by the Catholic Princes, then, after first attempting to bring about peace, he must repel force by force.

When, in 1528, the false reports were circulated, of which we hear in the history of the Pack negotiation, to wit, that the Catholic Princes of the Empire were on the point of falling upon the Protesters, Luther sent a letter to Johann, his

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 180 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 105), in a "Memorandum on the abolition of the Mass and monastic life, etc.," dated July 13, and assigned by Enders to the year 1530.

[2] Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. trans.), 5, p. 288.

[3] "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 76 *seq.*, where will be found the opinions of Link, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen and Amsdorf, given at the same time as to "whether a ruler may protect his subjects against religious persecution by the Emperor or other Princes by engaging in war?" Cp. the printed form of Luther's opinion given in G. Berbig, "Quellen und Darstellungen aus der Gesch. des Reformationszeitalters," Hft. 5, Leipzig, 1908, p. 98 f.

[4] "(*Oportet*) *ut id vocante aliquo singulari spiritu et fide faciat; alias omnino cedere debet et ipse gladio superiori et cum christianis, quos patitur, mori.*" Instead of "*patitur*," as Enders has it, Berbig has "*fatetur*," which is certainly better.

Elector, regarding the question of law. What was to be done if the Catholic powers, without the authorisation of the Emperor, attacked the Lutheran party? Luther's verdict was that such an act on the part of "scoundrel-princes" must be resisted by force of arms "as a real revolt and conspiracy against the Empire and His Imperial Majesty," but that "to take the offensive and anticipate such an action on the part of the Princes was in no wise to be counselled."[1]

On this occasion he manifested serious apprehension of the mischief which might be caused by a precipitate armed attack on the part of his princely patrons. It was a very different matter to look forward to a mere possibility of war and to find himself directly confronted with an outbreak of hostilities. "May God preserve us from such a horror! This would indeed be to fish with a draw-net and to take might for right. No greater blame could attach to the Evangel, for this would be no Peasant Rising but a Rising of the Princes, which would destroy Germany utterly to the joy of Satan."[2]

The above memorandum had dealt with the question of an attack by the Princes of the Empire. But what was to be done if the Emperor himself intervened?

The Lutheran Princes and Estates were anxious to exercise the utmost caution and restraint with regard to the Emperor personally, and in this Luther agreed with them. At Spires, in 1526, they had decided to behave "in such a way as to be able to answer for it before God and the Emperor," which, however, did not prevent them from establishing the "evangelical" worship in contravention of the decrees of Worms. It was hoped that the Emperor, hampered by his foreign policy, would not take up arms. When, accordingly, the protesting Princes, at the time of the Pack business, commenced warlike preparations against the Catholic party in the Empire, they solemnly declared at Rotach, in June, 1528, that they "excepted" the Emperor. In the same way they desired that their action at Spires in 1529, where they "protested" against the Emperor, should be looked upon as an appeal to the Emperor "better in-

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, pp. 1 and 55, p. 264 ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 231) (March 28, 1528).

[2] To Chancellor Brück, March 28, 1528, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 266 f. ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 231).

structed." When the Emperor, on account of the protest, began to take a serious view of the matter, any scruples which the sovereigns of Hesse and the Saxon Electorate may have felt concerning the employment of armed resistance against him soon evaporated. In Saxony it was held that a closer alliance of the Princes favourable to the innovations ought not to be "shorn of its meaning and value" by this "exemption of the Emperor"; the exemption, it was argued, was only of the person of the Emperor, not of his mandataries. A Saxon memorandum at the end of July, 1529, practically made an end of the exemption; "resistance, even to the Emperor, the most dangerous of our foes, belongs to the natural law of humanity."[1] This was the opinion of the Margrave of Brandenburg, and even more so of the Landgrave of Hesse. At Nuremberg, however' Lazarus Spengler sought to persuade the Council to negative this resolution; he was still entirely under the influence of Luther's earlier teaching, that the spirit must be ready to endure and suffer under the secular authorities.

Luther, in spite of his frequent threats and urgings, was not immediately to be induced to make common cause with the politicians. In January, 1530, Johann Brenz penned a memorandum in which, in terms of the utmost decision, he denies the lawfulness of resisting the Emperor, whereas on Christmas Day, 1529, in a similar memorandum requested of him by the Elector, Luther expresses himself most ambiguously. He, indeed, just hints at the unlawfulness of such resistance, but qualifies this admission by such words as the following: "There must be no resistance unless actual violence is done, or dire necessity compels"; "without a Council and without a hearing" there must be no war against the Emperor; before this, however, much water is likely to flow under the bridge, and God may easily find means of establishing peace; "hence my opinion is that the project of taking the field should be abandoned for the nonce, unless further cause or necessity should arise."[2]

[1] v. Schubert, "Beiträge zur Gesch. der evangel. Bekenntnis- und Bündnisbildung, 1529–1530," "Zeitschr. für KG.," 29, 1908, p. 273 f., an article giving interesting details concerning the earlier history of the League of Schmalkalden.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. xxiii., and, still better, "Briefe," ed. De Wette (Seidemann), 6, p. 105 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 192). Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 647 f.

In a letter to George, Margrave of Brandenburg, written on March 6, 1530, with the object of winning him over to the war party, Philip of Hesse declared that he had seen "in Luther's own writings to the Elector, that he sanctioned the latter's resisting the Emperor." This probably refers to the above memorandum which lies to-day in the Hessian archives at Marburg, the original of which seems to have been submitted to Philip; it may, however, have been some other letter since lost, or possibly the 1528 memorandum in which Luther speaks of the lawfulness of repelling the anticipated attack of the Catholic Princes.[1]

To take up arms in the cause of the Evangel was certainly not in accordance with Luther's previous teaching, however much he may himself have occasionally disregarded it. Owing to a certain mystical confidence in his cause, he could not bring himself to believe that things would ever come to be settled by force of arms. The Elector Johann, unlike Philip of Hesse, again began to hesitate. On January 27, 1530, he instructed the Wittenberg Faculty to let him have, within three weeks, the views of its lawyers. These counsellors declared in favour of the lawfulness of such a war against the Emperor, basing their view on two considerations, viz. that as an appeal had been made to a Council the Emperor could not in the meantime insist upon submission in matters of religion, and that, on his election at Frankfurt, it had been agreed that all the Princes and Estates should retain their customary rights. In spite of this, the lawyers consulted were not in favour of having forthwith recourse to open resistance, but suggested the exercise of patience and restraint.[2] Luther and Melanchthon replied only on March 6, 1530. What strikes one in Luther's reply is that "he has nothing personal to say on the relations between Emperor and Prince; this was a serious omission. All he sees is the individual Christian—in this case the sovereign—and his fidelity to the faith. . . . He is still unable to believe in a coming disaster, for this his God will surely not permit."[3]

His categorical declaration, in the memorandum of March 30, 1530, against the lawfulness of resistance, is of greater

[1] v. Schubert, *ibid.*, p. 306 f.

[2] Cp. Melanchthon in the letter to Bugenhagen, Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 7, p. 248.

[3] v. Schubert, *ibid.*, p. 313.

importance, for it is the last of the kind. After this the change already foreseen was to take place.

With an express appeal to his three advisers, Jonas, Bugenhagen and Melanchthon, Luther explains to the Elector,[1] that armed resistance "can in no way be reconciled with Scripture." Quite candidly he lays stress on the unfavourable prospects of resistance and the evil consequences which must attend success. Having taken the step, we should, he says, "be forced to go further, to drive away the Emperor and make ourselves Emperor." "In the confusion and tumult which would ensue everyone would want to be Emperor, and what horrible bloodshed and misery would that not cause."[2]

In principle, it will be observed, the letter left open a loophole in the event of a more favourable condition of the Protestant cause supervening, i.e. should it be possible to arrive at the desired result by some quieter and safer means, and without deposing the Emperor. None the less noteworthy are, however, the biblical utterances to which Luther again returns: "A Christian ought to be ready to suffer violence and injustice, more particularly from his own ruler," otherwise "there would be no authority or obedience left in the world." He would fain uphold, against all law, "whether secular or Popish," the truth, that "authority is of Divine institution." Hence the Princes must quietly submit to all the Emperor does; "Each one must answer for himself and maintain his belief at the risk of life and limb, and not drag the Princes with him into danger." "The matter must be committed to God." Hence the memorandum culminates in the exhortation to sacrifice "life and limb," i.e. to endure martyrdom.[3] This memorandum of Luther's was kept secret. At any rate the apparently heroic renunciation of all recourse to arms, together with the reference—reminiscent of his earlier mysticism—to the Christian's vocation to suffer violence and injustice, make of this memorandum a remarkable document not to be matched by any other writing of Luther at that time. Though there is little doubt that the sight of the com-

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 138 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 239).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 140 f. On the memorandum destined to become famous, cp. O. Clemen's article in "Theolog. Studien und Kritiken," 1909, p. 471 ff.

paratively helpless and critical position of the new party had its effect here, yet, beyond this, there is a psychological connection between the standpoint voiced in the memorandum and Luther's attitude after the inward change which occurred in him whilst yet a monk. His perfectly just injunction not to withstand the Emperor, he rests partly on the mystic theories he had imbibed at that time, partly on his early erroneous views concerning the rights of the authorities as guardians of outward, public order. In his enthusiasm for his cause he clings to that presumptuous confidence in a special Divine guidance, which had inspired him from the beginning of his career. "The call of a singular spirit and faith," which he considered necessary in the case of the Elector Frederick (see above, p. 48), he hears quite clearly within himself, though as yet this call does not urge him to advocate armed resistance to the Emperor, but merely inspires him blindly to confide in his cause and to exhort others to "martyrdom."

Simultaneously Melanchthon sent to the Elector a memorandum of his own, which, apart from being clearer in language and thought, closely resembles Luther's and betrays the same deficiencies.[1]

*The Change of* 1530 ; *Influence of the Courts.*

In that same year, 1530, after his return to Wittenberg from the Coburg on the termination of the Diet of Augsburg, a notable change took place in Luther's public attitude towards the question of the employment of force. This change we can follow step by step.

The fact that the lawyers attached to the Court had, in view of the circumstances, altered their minds, weighed strongly with Luther. Confronted with the measures of retaliation announced by the Diet, and more hopeful regarding the prospects of resistance now that the Protesters were joining forces, the councillors of the Saxon Electorate, with Chancellor Brück at their head, were inclined to the opinion that whatever sentences the Reichsgericht might pronounce in virtue of the Imperial edict of Augsburg might safely be disregarded, which, of course, was tantamount to a commencement of resistance. They were very anxious concerning the consequences of the decrees of Augsburg, as these

[1] Cp. "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 20.

involved the restitution of all the property and rights of the Church, which had been appropriated by the secular power in the name of religion. Johann, Elector of Saxony, for a while continued to regard resistance as unlawful. On reaching Nuremberg, on his return journey from Augsburg, he said to Luther's friend there, Wenceslaus Link : " Should one of my neighbours, or anyone else, attack me on account of the Evangel, I should resist him with all the force at my command, but should the Emperor come and attack me, he is my liege lord and I must yield to him, and what were more honourable than to be exterminated on account of the Word of God ? "[1] Gradually, however, he was brought over to the new standpoint of his councillors. The example of the Landgrave of Hesse, who belonged to the war party and was very hopeful of the results of a league, had great weight with him, and likewise his determination not to surrender to the executors of the Imperial edict the Church property which had been confiscated. The innovations which, in the beginning, had seemed a work of high-minded idealists, were now pushed forward by many of the Princes, for motives of the very lowest, viz. to avoid making restitution of property which had been unlawfully distrained. On unevangelical motives such as these it was that the theory of submission to the secular power, in particular to the Emperor, announced by Luther in such grandiloquent language, was to suffer shipwreck.

Philip of Hesse, who was aware of the weak points in Luther's previous declarations on the subject, was the first to attempt to bring about a change in his views.

He entered into communication with Luther in October, 1530, and sent him a " writing," together with a " Christian admonition," to encourage him and his theologians, in whom, during the Diet, he thought he had detected a certain tendency to waver. Luther replied, on October 15, in a very devout letter, assuring the Landgrave that he had " received both the writing and the admonition with pleasure and gladness." " I beg to thank Your Highness for your good and earnest counsel " ; he and his, as time went on, were " even less disposed to yield " and reckoned on the help of God.[2]

Philip, in his next letter a week later, came at once to the crucial point, the question of resistance. He reminded Luther of the memorandum in which he had said, they must indeed not

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 249.
[2] " Briefwechsel," 8, p. 284.

" commence the war, but that if they were attacked they might defend themselves " (p. 50 f.). Philip, without further ado, explains his plans against the Emperor. The Emperor, he says with perfect frankness, "took the oath to his Princes at his election, just as much as they did to him. . . . Hence, if the Emperor does not keep his oath to us, he reduces himself to the rank of any other man, and must no longer be regarded as a real Emperor, but as a mere breaker of the peace." The " most important of the Electors and Estates " had not agreed to the Reichstags-abschied. Hence there was hope of triumphing over the Emperor. In his letter to Luther, he even makes use of comparisons from the Bible, just as Luther himself was in the habit of doing, and this he did again at a later date when seeking Luther's sanction for his bigamy. " God in the Old Testament did not forsake His people or allow the country to perish which trusted in Him." He had come to the aid of the Bohemians and of " many other too, against Emperors and such-like, who treated their subjects with unjust violence." This being so, he requests Luther for his " advice and opinion " whether force may not be used, seeing that " His Majesty is determined to re-establish the devil's doctrine."[1]

Luther now saw himself obliged openly to avow his standpoint, all the more as a similar request had reached him from the Elector, in this case possibly a verbal one. He left the Landgrave to wait and replied first to the Elector, though only by word of mouth, so as not to commit himself irretrievably on so delicate a matter. What his reply exactly was is not known. At the end of October he had to go to Torgau for a conference on the subject with the Elector's legal advisers and possibly those of other Princes. Melanchthon and Jonas accompanied him, and the negotiations were protracted and lively.[2]

During these negotiations Luther replied from Torgau, on October 28, to the letter from the Landgrave referred to above, though in general and evasive terms. He says, he hopes no blood will be shed, but, in the event of things going so far, he had told the Elector his opinion on resistance, and of this the Landgrave would hear in due season ; that it would be dangerous for him, as an ecclesiastic, to put this into writing, for many reasons.[3] Hence for the nonce he was determined to express himself only verbally on this tiresome question.

In what direction his thoughts were then turning may be gathered from what he says to the Landgrave in the same letter concerning his writings ; the latter had asked him, he says, for a controversial booklet, " as a consolation for the weak " ; he intended " in any case to publish a booklet shortly . . . ad-

[1] Reprinted by Enders in " Luthers Briefwechsel," 8, p. 286. Written on October 21, 1530.

[2] Luther to Lazarus Spengler, February 15, 1531, " Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 213 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 361) : " It happened that they disputed sharply with us at Torgau."

[3] " Briefwechsel," 8, p. 295.

monishing all consciences, that no subject was bound to render obedience should His Imperial Majesty persist"; and in which he will prove that the Emperor's demands are "blasphemous, murderous and diabolical"—still, the booklet was not to be termed "seditious." He here is referring either to the "Auff das vermeint Edict" or to the "Warnunge." We have already spoken of the revolutionary character of the language he used in these tracts published in the early part of 1531, and, subsequently, in the reply "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen."[1] What he was there to advocate goes far beyond the limits of mere passive resistance.

He was at first unwilling to declare his views at Torgau. Not to contradict what he had previously said, he protested that the question did not concern him, since, as a theologian, his business was to teach Christ only. As regards secular matters, he could only counsel compliance with the law and, on the matter of forcible resistance to the Emperor, that any action taken should be conformable to the "written laws." "But what these laws were he neither knew nor cared."[2]

The assembled lawyers were, however, loath to leave Torgau without having reached an understanding, and submitted another statement to Luther and his colleagues, requesting their opinion on it. In this document they had sought to prove, from sources almost exclusively canonical, that it was lawful to resist the Emperor by force, because "he proceeds and acts contrary to law," not being a judge in matters of religion, and that, even if he were such a judge, he had no right to do anything on account of the appeal to a Council. They urged that it was necessary to "obey God and evangelical truth rather than men," and that the Emperor was "no more than a private individual so far as the 'cognition' and 'statution' of this matter went . . . nor does the 'execution' come within his province." For the sake of the salvation of souls the Emperor was not to be regarded as "judge in the matter of our faith," for his "injustice is undeniable, manifest, patent and notorious, yea, more than notorious."[3]

The councillors chose to deal with the matter chiefly from the point of view of canon law, as is shown by their misquotations from such well-known canonists as Panormitanus,

[1] See vol. ii., p. 391 ff.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 64, p. 265.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 266 ff. ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 296, dated "end of October, 1530").

Innocent IV., Felinus, Baldus de Ubaldis and the Archidiaconus (Baisius).[1] In spite of this they calmly assumed the truth of the proposition, condemned in canon law, of the subordination of Pope to Council and of the right of appealing from Pope to Council. They took it for granted that Luther's doctrines had not yet been finally rejected by the Church, and, in contradiction with actual fact, declared that the Augsburg Reichstagsabschied "admitted and allowed" that Luther's doctrines, seeing that they were supposed to have been condemned by previous Councils, should come up for discussion at the next. As a matter of fact the Reichstagsabschied contained nothing of the sort "concerning doctrines of faith."[2]

This document was submitted to the theologians before they left Torgau, and their embarrassment was reflected in their written reply. Luther agreed with his friends that the only way out of the difficulty was to put the whole thing on the shoulders of the lawyers. He and his party declared that they stood altogether outside the question, since the councillors had already decided independently of them in favour of armed resistance, on the ground of the secular, Imperial laws. As for the reasons alleged from canon law, he refused to take them into consideration. Later on he was glad to be able to appeal to this subterfuge, and declared that he "had given no counsel."[3]

At this time, however, Luther, Melanchthon and Jonas put their signatures to a memorandum in which they sought to protect themselves by certain assurances which make a painful impression on the reader.

It was true that hitherto they had taught, so they say, "that the [secular] authorities must on no account be resisted," but, they had been unaware "that the authorities' own laws, which we have always taught must be diligently obeyed, sanctioned this." They had also taught, "that the secular laws must be allowed to take their own course, because the Gospel teaches nothing against the worldly law." "Accordingly, now that the doctors and experts in the law have proved that our present case is such that it is lawful to resist the authorities, we, for our part, "cannot disprove this from Scripture, when self-defence is called for, even though it should be against the Emperor himself." They then come to the question of arming. This they

[1] Cp. Enders "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 299 f.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 249.
[3] "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 344. See below, p. 60.

declare to be distinctly practical and advisable, especially as "any day other causes may arise where it would be essential to be ready to defend oneself, not merely from worldly motives, but from duty and constraint of conscience." It was necessary "to be ready to encounter a power which might suddenly arise."[1]

The Landgrave of Hesse was then making great preparations for war, with an eye on Würtemberg, where, as he admitted publicly, he wished forcibly to re-instate Duke Ulrich, a friend to the religious innovations.

The theologians of the Margraviate of Brandenburg, unlike those of Wittenberg, were opposed to resistance. They replied then, or somewhat later, concerning the views put forward by the lawyers, that it was a question of the supreme secular Majesty, not of a judge who was subservient to a higher secular sword, hence that the lawyers' suppositions could not stand.[2] Little heed was however paid to their objection. On the other hand the proposal made by the legal consulters, that further representations should be made to the Emperor regarding the execution of the Reichstagsabschied, was described by the theologians as "not expedient," though it might be further discussed at the Nuremberg Conference on November 11 (Martinmas).[3]

Instead, it was for November 13 that a summons, dispatched by Saxony on October 31, invited a conference to meet at Nuremberg to discuss the matter, and take the steps which eventually led to the formation of the defensive League of Schmalkalden. At first it was proposed, that, after the Nuremberg conference, another should be held at Schmalkalden on November 28, though as a matter of fact the only meeting held commenced at Schmalkalden on December 22.

Only now did it become apparent that Luther and his theologians had, at least in the opinion of the Saxon politicians, expressed themselves privately much more openly in favour of resistance than would appear from the above memorandum. The envoys from the Saxon Electorate appealed with great emphasis to the opinion of the Wittenberg divines, in order to show the lawfulness of the plan of armed resistance and the expediency of the proposed League. Armed with this authority they openly "defied our ministers," wrote Lazarus Spengler of Nuremberg, to Veit Dietrich on February 20, 1531. Spengler, like the

[1] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 225. Enders ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 298) gave reasons for dating it at the "end of October, 1530."

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 249.

[3] Text in Enders, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 296 f. For above date see also O. Winckelmann, "Der Schmalkaldische Bund, 1530–1532, und der Nürnberger Religionsfriede," 1892, p. 271.

Nuremberg Councillors and those of Brandenburg, was opposed to resistance and to the League. He was surprised that "Dr. Martin should so contradict himself."[1] The fact is that he was the only person to whom Luther's previous memorandum of March, 1530, had been communicated.[2]

The Nuremberg magistrates appealed, among other reasons, to the clear testimony of Scripture which did not sanction such proceedings against the supreme secular authority. They feared the consequences of a religious war for Germany, just as Luther himself had formerly done, but, in spite of their adherence to the new faith, they were more frank and courageous in their effort to avert it than he on whose shoulders the chief responsibility in the war was to rest.

One sentence of Melanchthon's, written in those eventful days, singularly misrepresents the true position of affairs. To his friend Camerarius, on January 1, 1531, he says: "We discountenance all arming."[3]

Melanchthon also writes: "We are now consulted less frequently than heretofore as to the lawfulness of resistance," and he repeats much the same thing on February 15, 1531: "On the matter of the League no one now questions either Luther or myself."[4] If we can here detect a faint note of wonder and regret, we may assuredly ask whether the very behaviour of the theologians at Torgau was not the reason of their advice being at a discount; their dissimulation and ambiguity were not of a nature to inspire the lawyers and statesmen with much respect.

It was some time before this vacillation in official, written statements came to an end. Some more instances of it are to be met with in the epistolary communications between Luther and the town of Nuremberg, which was opposed to the Schmalkalden tendencies.

Prior to November 20, 1530, the Elector of Saxony had addressed himself to the magistrates of Nuremberg with the request that "they would make preparations for resisting the unjust and violent measures of the Emperor." Of this Veit Dietrich informed Luther from Nuremberg on that day,

[1] Enders, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 298, from M. M. Mayer, "Spengleriana," 1830, p. 78.
[2] Cp. "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 22; Mayer, *ibid.*, p. 73.
[3] "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 469. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 471.

adding that the Elector had made a reference to an approval of the measures of defence secured from his "Councillors and Doctors," but had said nothing of the theologians.[1] News was, however, subsequently received in Nuremberg that the Saxon envoys present at Schmalkalden had boasted of the support of Luther and his friends.

It was in consequence of this that the Nuremberg preacher, Wenceslaus Link, enquired of Luther in the beginning of January, 1531, or possibly earlier, whether the news which had reached Nuremberg by letter was true, viz. that "they had expressed the opinion that resistance might be employed against the Emperor."

Without delay, on January 15, Luther assured him: "We have by no means given such a counsel" ("*nullo modo consuluimus*").[2]

By way of further explanation he adds: "When some said openly that it was not necessary to consult the theologians at all, or to trouble about them, and that the matter concerned only the lawyers who had decided in favour of its lawfulness, I for my part declared: I view the matter as a theologian, but if the lawyers can prove its permissibility from their laws, I see no reason why they should not use their laws; that is altogether their business. If the Emperor by virtue of his laws determines the permissibility of resistance in such a case, then let him bear the consequences of his law; I, however, pronounce no opinion or judgment on this law, but I stick to my theology." It is thus that he expresses himself concerning the argument which the lawyers had, as a matter of fact, drawn almost exclusively from canon law, the texts of which they misread.

He then puts forward his own theory in favour of the belligerent nobles of his party, according to which a ruler, when he acts as a politician, is not acting as a Christian ("*non agit ut christianus*"), as though his conscience as a sovereign could be kept distinct from his conscience as a Christian. "A Christian is neither Prince nor commoner nor anything whatever in the personal world. Hence whether resistance is permissible to a ruler as ruler, let them settle according to their own judgment and conscience. To a Christian nothing [of that sort] is lawful, for he is dead to the world."

"The explanations [Luther's] have proceeded thus far," he concludes this strange justification, "and this much you may tell Lazarus [Spengler, the clerk to the Nuremberg Council] concerning my views. I see clearly, however, that, even should we oppose their project, they are nevertheless resolved to offer resistance and not to draw back, so full are they of their own ideas; I preach in vain that God will come to our assistance,

[1] Enders, 8, p. 322. [2] "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 344.

and that no resistance will be required. God's help is indeed visible in this, that the Diet has led to no result, and that our foes have hitherto taken no steps. God will continue to afford us His help; but not everyone has faith. I console myself with this thought: since the Princes are determined not to accept our advice, they sin less, and act with greater interior assurance, by proceeding in accordance with the secular law, than were they to act altogether against their conscience and directly contrary to Holy Scripture. It is true they do not wit that they are acting contrary to Scripture, though they are not transgressing the civil law. Therefore I let them have their way, I am not concerned."

He thus disclaimed all responsibility, and he did so with all the more confidence by reason of his sermons to the people, where he continued to speak as before of the love of peace which actuated him, ever with the words on his lips: "By the Word alone." "Christ," he exclaims, "will not suffer us to hurt Pope or rebel by so much as a hair."[1]

It was easy to foresee that after such replies from Luther, Spengler and the magistrates of Nuremberg would not be pleased with him. Possibly Link had doubts about making known at Nuremberg a writing which was more in the nature of an excuse than a reply, since, on such a burning question which involved the future of Germany, a more reliable decision might reasonably have been looked for. On February 20, fresh enquiries and complaints concerning the news which had come to Nuremberg of Luther's approval of organised resistance, reached Veit Dietrich, from the Council clerk, Spengler, and were duly transmitted to Luther (see above, p. 58 f.). Luther now thought it advisable, on account of the charge of having retracted his previous opinion, to justify himself to Spengler and the magistrates. In his written reply of February 15, he assured the clerk, that he "was not conscious of such a retractation." For, to the antecedent, he still adhered as before, viz. that it was necessary to obey the Emperor and to keep his laws. As for the conclusion, that the Emperor decrees that in such a case he may be resisted, this, he says, "was an inference of the jurists, not of our own; should they bring forward a proof in support of this conclusion—which as yet they have not done—('*probationem exspectamus, quam non videmus*')—we shall be forced to admit that the Emperor has renounced his rights in favour of a political and Imperial law which supersedes the natural law." Of the Divine law and of the Bible teaching, which Luther had formerly advocated with so much warmth, we find here no mention.[2]

The scruples of the magistrates of Nuremberg were naturally not set at rest by such answers, but continued as strong as ever.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $4^2$, p. 290, in the "Hauspostille," Second Sermon for the 5th Sunday after Epiphany (*c.* 1532).

[2] To Lazarus Spengler, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 213 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 361). Cp. Ludw. Cardauns, "Die Lehre vom Widerstande des Volks im Luthertum und im Calvinismus des 16. Jahrhunderts, Diss.," 1903, pp. 6–18.

After the League had already been entered into, an unknown Nuremberg councillor of Lutheran sympathies, wrote again to the highest theological authority in Wittenberg for information as to its legality. In his reply Luther again threw off all responsibility, referring him, even more categorically than before, to the politicians: "They must take it upon their own conscience and see whether they are in the right. . . . If they have right on their side, then the League is well justified." Personally he preferred to refrain from pronouncing any opinion, and this on religious grounds, because such leagues were frequently entered into "in reliance on human aid," and had also been censured by the Prophets of the Old Covenant. Had he chosen, the distinguished Nuremberger might have taken these words as equivalent to a doubt as to the moral character of the League of Schmalkalden. Furthermore, Luther adds: "A good undertaking and a righteous one" must, in order to succeed, rely on God rather than on men. "What is undertaken in real confidence in God, ends well, even though it should be mistaken and sinful," and the contrary likewise holds good; for God is jealous of His honour even in our acts.[1]

The citizens of Nuremberg had, in the meantime, on February 19, sent to the Saxon envoys their written refusal to join the League of Schmalkalden. The magistrates therein declared that they were still convinced (as Luther had been formerly) that resistance to the Emperor was forbidden by Holy Writ, and that the reasons to the contrary advanced by the learned men of Saxony were insufficient.[2] George, Elector of the Franconian part of Brandenburg, who was otherwise one of the most zealous supporters of the innovations, also refused to join the League.

The memorandum in which Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen and Melanchthon had declared, in March, 1530, that the employment of force in defence of the Gospel "could not in any way be reconciled with Scripture" (above, p. 51 f.) was kept a secret. Not even Melanchthon himself was permitted to send it to his friend Camerarius, though he promised to show it him on a visit.[3] Myconius, however, sent it from Gotha confidentially to Lang at Erfurt, on September 19, 1530, and wrote at the same time: "I am sending you the opinion of Luther and Philip, but on condition that you show it to no one. For it is not good

[1] To a Nuremberg burgher, March 18, 1531, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 221 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 378).

[2] Winckelmann, "Der Schmalkaldische Bund," p. 91. Cp. Enders, 8, p. 361, n. 2.

[3] "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 22.

that Satan's cohorts should be informed of all the secrets of Christ; besides, there are some amongst us too weak to be able to relish such solid food."[1]

In spite of these precautions copies of the "counsel" came into circulation. The text reached Cochlæus, who forthwith, in 1531, had it printed as a document throwing a timely light on the belligerent League entered into at Schmalkalden in that year. He subjoined a severe, running criticism, a reply by Paul Bachmann, Abbot of the monastery of Altenzell, and other writings.[2]

Cochlæus pointed out, that it was not the Emperor but Luther, who had been a persecutor of the Gospel for more than twelve years. Should, however, the Emperor persecute the true Gospel of Christ, then the exhortation contained in Luther's memorandum patiently to allow things to take their course and even to suffer martyrdom, would be altogether inadmissible, because there existed plenty means of obtaining redress; in such a case God was certainly more to be obeyed than the Emperor; any Prince who should assist the Emperor in such an event must be looked upon as a tyrant and ravening wolf; it was, on the contrary, the duty of the Princes to risk life and limb should the Gospel and true faith of their subjects be menaced; and in the same way the towns and all their burghers must offer resistance; this would be no revolt, seeing that the Imperial authority would be tyrannously destroying the historic ecclesiastical order as handed down, in fact, the Divine order. Luther's desire, Cochlæus writes, that each one should answer for himself to the Emperor, was unreasonable and quite impossible for the unlearned. Finally, he warmly invites the doctors of the new faith to return to Mother Church.[3]

The author of the other reply to Luther's secret memorandum dealt more severely with it. Abbot Bachmann declares, that it was not inspired by charity but by the cunning and malice of the old serpent. "As long as Luther had a free hand to carry on his heresies unopposed, he raged like a madman, called the Pope Antichrist, the Emperor a bogey, the Princes fools, tyrants and jackanapes, worse even than the Turks; but, now that he foresees opposition, the old serpent turns round and faces his tail, simulating a false humility, patience and reverence for the authorities, and says: 'A Christian must be ready to endure violence from his rulers!' Yet even this assertion is not true always and everywhere. . . ." Should a ruler really persecute

[1] From the Gotha Cod., 399, fol. 139, in Enders, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 242.

[2] Sammelschrift ohne Gesamttitel, Dresden, 1532. Vorne: Innhalt dieses Büchleins. 1. Ein Auszug usw.; 2. Rathschlag M. Luthers an den Churfürsten von Sachsen; 3. Erklärung usw.

[3] For further particulars of the criticism of Cochlæus, see Enders, 7, p. 242 ff.

the Divine teaching, then it would be necessary to defend oneself against him. "I should have had to write quite a big book," he concludes, "had I wished to reply one by one to all the sophistries which Luther accumulates in this his counsel."[1]

### *The League of Schmalkalden and the Religious Peace of Nuremberg.*

The League of Schmalkalden was first drawn up and subscribed to by Johann, Elector of Saxony, and Ernest, Duke of Brunswick, on February 27, 1531. The other members affixed their signatures to the document at Schmalkalden on March 29. The League comprised, in addition to the Electorate of Saxony and the Duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, the Landgraviate of Hesse under Philip, the prime mover of the undertaking, and was also subscribed to by Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt, Counts Gebhard and Albert of Mansfeld, and the townships of Strasburg, Ulm, Constance, Reutlingen, Memmingen, Lindau, Biberach, Isny, Lübeck, Magdeburg and Bremen.

A wedge had been driven into the unity of Germany at the expense of her internal strength and external development. What had been initiated at Gotha in 1526 by the armed coalition between Landgrave Philip of Hesse and the Elector of Saxony, in the interests of the religious innovations, was now consummated.

The obligation to which the members of the League of Schmalkalden pledged themselves by oath was as follows: "That where one party is attacked or suffers violence for the Word of God or for causes arising from it, or on any other pretext, each one shall treat the matter in no other way than as though he himself were attacked, and shall therefore, without even waiting for the others, come to the assistance of the party suffering violence, and succour him to the utmost of his power." The alliance, which was first concluded for six years, was repeatedly renewed later and strengthened by the accession of new members.

Luther, for his part, had now arrived at the goal whither his steps had been tending and towards which so many of the statements contained in his letters and writings had pointed, inspired as they were by a fiery prepossession in favour of his cause. It suited him admirably, that, when the

[1] Cp. the extract given by Enders, *ibid.*, 244.

iron which had so long been heating came upon the anvil, he should remain in the background, leaving to the lawyers the first place and the duty of tendering opinions. In his eyes, however, the future success of the League, in view of its then weakness, was still very doubtful. Should the Schmalkalden conference turn out to be the commencement of a period of misfortune for the innovations, still, thanks to the restraint which Luther had imposed on himself, in spite of his being the moving spirit and the religious link between the allies, his preaching of the Evangel would be less compromised. The miseries of the Peasant War, which had been laid to his account, the excesses of the Anabaptists against public order, the unpopularity which he had earned for himself everywhere on account of the revolts and disturbance of the peace, were all of a nature to make him more cautious. There are many things to show, that, instead of promoting the outbreak of hostilities in the days immediately subsequent to the Diet of Augsburg, he would very gladly have contented himself with the assurance, that, for the present, the Reichstagsabschied not being capable of execution, things might as well take their course. By this policy he would gain time ; he was also anxious for the new faith quietly to win new ground, so as to demonstrate to the Emperor by positive proofs the futility of any proceedings against himself.

The wavering attitude of many of the Catholic Estates at Augsburg had inspired him with great hopes of securing new allies. It there became apparent that either much had been rotten for a long time past in that party of the Diet which hitherto had been faithful to the Pope, or that the example of the Protesters had proved infectious.

Wider prospects were also opening out for Lutheranism. In Würtemberg Catholicism was menaced by the machinations of the Landgrave of Hesse. There seemed a chance of the towns of Southern Germany being won back from Zwinglian influences and making common cause with Wittenberg. Henry the Eighth's failure in his divorce proceedings also raised the hopes of the friends of the new worship that England, too, might be torn away from the Papal cause. At the conclusion of the Diet, Bugenhagen had been summoned by the magistrates of Lübeck in order to introduce the new Church system in that city.

In Bavaria there was danger lest the jealousy of the Dukes at the growth of the house of Habsburg, and their opposition to the expected election of Ferdinand as King, should help in the spread of schism.

It is noteworthy that Luther's letter to Ludwig Senfl, the eminent and not unfriendly musician and composer, bandmaster to Duke William and a great favourite at the Court of Bavaria, should have been sent just at this time. To him Luther was high in his praise of the Court: Since the Dukes of Bavaria were so devoted to music, he must extol them, and give them the preference over all other Princes, for friends of music must necessarily possess a good seed of virtue in their soul. This connection with Senfl he continued in an indirect fashion.[1]

The best answer to the resolutions passed at Augsburg seemed to the first leader of the movement to lie in expansion, i.e. in great conquests, to be achieved in spite of all threats of violence.

Instead of having recourse to violence, the Empire, however, entered into those negotiations which were ultimately to lead, in 1532, to the so-called Religious Peace of Nuremberg. At about this time Luther sent a missive to his Elector in which his readiness for a religious war is perfectly plain.

The document, which was composed jointly with the other Wittenberg theologians, and for the Latinity of which Melanchthon may have been responsible, treats, it would appear, of certain Imperial demands for concessions made at the Court of the Elector on September 1, 1531, previous to the Schmalkalden conference. These demands manifest the utmost readiness on the part of the authorities of the Empire to make advances. Yet Luther in his reply refuses to acquiesce even in the proposal that people everywhere should be allowed to receive the Sacrament under one kind, according to the ritual hitherto in use. We are bound to declare openly and at all times, he says, that all those who refrain from receiving under both kinds are guilty of sin. He continues, referring to the other points under debate: It is true that we are told of the terrible consequences which must result should "war and rebellion break out, the collapse of all public order fall like a scourge upon Germany, and the Turks and other foreign powers subjugate the divided nation. To this our reply is: Sooner let the world perish than have peace at the expense of the Evangel. We know our teaching is certain; not a hair's breadth may we yield for the sake of the public peace.

[1] See vol. ii., p. 171 f. "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 277.

We must commend ourselves to God, Who has hitherto protected His Church during the most terrible wars, and Who has helped us beyond all expectation."[1]

This argument based on the Evangel cuts away the ground from under all Luther's previous more moderate counsels.

The religious peace of Nuremberg was in the end more favourable to him than he could have anticipated. To his dudgeon, however, he had to remain idle while the guidance of the movement was assumed almost entirely by the League of Schmalkalden, the fact that the League was a military one supplying a pretext for dispossessing him more and more of its direction. Already, in 1530, he had been forced to look on while Philip made advances to the sectaries of Zürich and the other Zwinglian towns of Switzerland, and concluded a treaty with them on November 16 for mutual armed assistance in the event of an attack on account of the faith. "This will lead to a great war," he wrote to the Elector, "and, as your Electoral Highness well knows, in such a war we shall be defending the error concerning the Sacrament, which will thus become our own; from this may Christ, my Lord, preserve your Electoral Highness."[2]

His apprehensions, lest the good repute of his cause should be damaged by unjust bloodshed, grew, when, in 1534, the warlike Landgrave set out for Würtemberg.

It was a crying piece of injustice and violence when Philip of Hesse, after having allied himself with France, by means of a lucky campaign, robbed King Ferdinand of Würtemberg and established the new faith in that country by reinstating the Lutheran Duke Ulrich.[3]

Before the campaign Luther had declared that it was "contrary to the Gospel," and would "bring a stain upon our teaching," and that "it was wrong to disturb or violate the peace of the commonwealth."[4] He hinted at the same time that he did not believe in a successful issue: "No wise man," he said subsequently, "would have risked it."[5]—Yet, when the whole country was in the hands of the

[1] "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 76. Enders refers it to the "latter half of August, 1531."

[2] On December 12, 1530, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 204 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 331).

[3] Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," $3^{18}$, p. 292 ff.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 332 and Mathesius "Tischreden," p. 133. Account given in his own words.

[5] "Werke," *ibid.*, p. 334 *seq.*

conqueror, when a treaty of peace had been signed in which the articles on religion were purposely framed in obscure and ambiguous terms, while the prospects of the new faith, in view of Ulrich's character, seemed excellent, Luther expressed his joy and congratulations to the Hessian Court through Justus Menius, a preacher of influence: "We rejoice that the Landgrave has returned happily after having secured peace. It is plain that this is God's work; contrary to the general expectation He has set our fears to rest! He Who has begun the work will also bring it to a close. Amen."[1]

Luther himself tells us later what foreign power it was that had rendered this civil war in the very heart of Germany possible. "Before he [the Landgrave] reinstated the Duke of Würtemberg he was in France with the King, who lent him 200,000 coronati to carry on the war."[2]

The fear of an impending great war between the religious parties in Germany was gradually dispelled. The object of the members of the League of Schmalkalden in seeking assistance from France and England was to strengthen their position against a possible attack on the part of the Emperor; at the same time, by refusing to lend any assistance against the Turks, they rendered him powerless.

Luther now ventured to prophesy an era of peace. We shall have peace, he said, and there is no need to fear a war on account of religion. "But questions will arise concerning the bishopries and the foundations," as the Emperor is trying to get the rich bishopries into his hands, and the other Princes likewise; "this will lead to quarrels and blows, for others also want their share."[3] This confirms the observation made above: In place of a religious struggle the Princes preferred to wrangle over ecclesiastical property and rights, of which they were jealous. Thus Luther's prediction concerning the character of the struggle in the years previous to the Schmalkalden and Thirty Years' War was not so far wrong.

### *Luther and the Religious War in Later Years.*

Luther was never afterwards to revert to his original disapproval of armed resistance to the Emperor.

[1] On July 14, 1534, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 63.
[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 134.
[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 362.

In his private conversations we frequently find, on the contrary, frank admissions quite in agreement with the above remark on "war and rebellion" being justified by the Divine and indestructible Evangel. It is not only lawful, he says, but necessary to fight against the Emperor in the cause of the Evangel. "Should he begin a war against our religion, our worship and our Church, then he is a tyrant. Of this there is no question. Is it not lawful to fight in defence of piety? Even nature demands that we should take up arms in defence of our children and our families. Indeed, I shall, if possible, address a writing to the whole world exhorting all to the defence of their people."[1]

Other similar statements are met with in his Table-Talk at a later date. "It is true a preacher ought not to fight in his own defence, for which reason I do not take a sword with me when I mount the pulpit, but only on journeys."[2] "The lawyers," he said, on February 7, 1538, "command us to resist the Emperor, simply desiring that a madman should be deprived of his sword. . . . The natural law requires that if one member injure another he be put under restraint, made a prisoner and kept in custody. But from the point of view of theology, there are doubts (Matt. v., 1 Peter ii.). I reply, however, that statecraft permits, nay commands, self-defence, so that whoever does not defend himself is regarded as his own murderer," in spite of the fact, that, as a Christian and "believer in the Kingdom of Christ, he must suffer all things, and may not in this guise either eat or drink or beget children." In many cases it is necessary to put away "the *Christianum* and bring to the fore the *politicam personam*,"[3] just as a man may slay incontinently the violator of his wife. "We are fighting, not against Saul, but against Absalom." Besides, the Emperor might not draw the sword without the consent of the Seven Electors. "The sword belongs to us, and only at our request may he use it."[4] "Without the seven he has no power; indeed, if even one is not for him, his power is nil and he is no longer monarch. . . . I do not deprive the Emperor of the sword, but the Pope, who has no business to lord it and act as a tyrant."[5] "The Emperor will not commence a war on his own account but for the sake of the Pope, whose vassal he has become; he is only desirous of defending the abominations of the Pope, who hates the Gospel and thinks of nothing but his own godless power."[6]

Luther, in his anger against the Papists and the priests, goes so far as to place them on a par with the Turks and to advise

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 334, "Tischreden." [2] *Ibid.*

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 363 *seq.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 366 *seq.*: "*Ita ut nos habeamus gladium traditum possessorium. Cæsar vero tantum in nobis habet gladium petitorium*, these are not times *ut tempore martyrum, ubi Diocletianus solus regebat.*"

[5] The passage from "indeed if one" to "as a tyrant" was omitted by Rebenstock in his Table-Talk and is differently worded in the German Table-Talk, "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 194 f.

[6] "Colloquia," l.c., pp. 365, 367: "*Papæ adimo gladium, non cæsari, quia papa non debet esse magistratus neque tyrannus.*"

their being slaughtered ;[1] this he did, for instance, in May, 1540. In 1539 he says : " Were I the Landgrave, I should set about it, and either perish or else slay them because they refuse peace in a good and just cause ; but as a preacher it does not beseem me to counsel this, much less to do it myself."[2] The Papal Legate, Paolo Vergerio, when with Luther in 1535, expressed to him his deep indignation at the deeds of King Henry VIII. of England, who had put to death Cardinal John Fisher and Sir Thomas More. Luther wrote to Melanchthon of Vergerio's wrath and his threats against the King, but shared his feelings so little as actually to say : " Would that there were a few more such kings of England to put to death these cardinals, popes and legates, these traitors, thieves, robbers, nay, devils incarnate." Such as they, he says, plunder and rob the churches and are worse than a hundred men of the stamp of Verres or a thousand of that of Dionysius. " How is it that Princes and lords, who are always complaining to us of the injury done to the churches, endure it ? "[3]

Even in official memoranda Luther soon threw all discretion to the winds, and ventured to speak most strongly in favour of armed resistance.

Such was the memorandum, of January, 1539, addressed to the Elector Johann Frederick and signed at Weimar by Jonas, Bucer and Melanchthon, as well as Luther. The Elector had asked for it owing to the dangerous position of the League of Schmalkalden, now that peace had been concluded between the Emperor and Francis I. of France. He had also enquired how far the allies might take advantage of the war with the Turks ; and whether they might make their assistance against the Turks contingent upon certain concessions being granted to the new worship. The second question will be dealt with later ;[4] as to the first, whether resistance to the Emperor was allowed, the signatories replied affirmatively in words which go further than any previous admission.[5]

[1] In the " Tischreden " of Mathesius (p. 80), Luther says : " We shall never be successful against them [the Turks] unless we fall upon them and the priests at the right moment and smite them dead." The editor remarks : " By this he can only mean the priests in general, not those only of the two small bishoprics." See vol. ii., p. 324. Cp. vol. ii., p. 325, and N. Paulus, " Luther über die Tötung katholischer Geistlichen " (Histor.-polit. Blätter 147, 1911), p. 92 ff.

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 402.

[3] Commencement of December, 1535, " Briefwechsel," 10, p. 275 : " *Utinam haberent plures reges Angliæ qui illos occiderent.*"

[4] See xv., 4. For reply see Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 401.

[5] " Briefwechsel," 12, p. 78, and Letters ed. by De Wette, 6, p. 223.

They had already, they say, "given their answer and opinion, and there was no doubt that this was the Divine truth which we are bound to confess even at the hour of death, viz. that not only is defence permitted, but a protest is verily, and indeed, incumbent on all." Here it will be observed that Luther no longer says merely that the lawyers inferred this from the Imperial law, but that God, "to Whom we owe this duty," commanded that "idolatry and forbidden worship" should not be tolerated. Numerous references to the "Word of God" regarding the authorities were adduced in support of this contention (Ps. lxxxii. 3; Exod. xx. 7; Ps. ii. 10, 11; 1 Tim. i. 9). It is pointed out how in the Sacred Books the "Kings of Juda are praised for exterminating idolatry." "Every father is bound to protect his wife and child from murder, and there is no difference between a private murderer and the Emperor, should he attempt unjust violence outside his office." The case is on all fours with one where the "overlord tries to impose on his subjects blasphemy and idolatry," hence war must be waged, just as "Constantine fell upon Licinius, his ally and brother-in-law." David, Ezechias and other holy kings likewise risked life and limb for the honour of God. "This is all to be understood as referring to defence." But "where the ban has been proclaimed against one or more of the allies," "discord has already broken out." Those under the ban have lost "position and dignity," and may commence the attack without further ado. Still, "it is not for *us* to assume that hostilities should be commenced at once"; this is the business of those actually concerned.

Such was the advice of Luther and those mentioned above to the Elector, when he was about to attend a meeting of the League of Schmalkalden at Frankfurt, where another attempt was to be made to prevent the outbreak of hostilities by negotiations with the Emperor's ministers. Luther was apprehensive of war as likely to lead to endless misfortunes, yet his notion that "idolatry" must be rooted out would allow of no yielding on his part. "It is almost certain that this memorandum was made use of at the negotiations preliminary to the Frankfurt conference, seeing that the Elector in the final opinion he addressed to his councillors repeats it almost word for word."[1] The memorandum was probably drawn up by Melanchthon.

At that very time Luther seems also to have received news from Brandenburg that Joachim II., the Elector, was about to Protestantise his lands. Such tidings would naturally make him all the more defiant.

[1] Thus the editor of the memorandum, in "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 80 f., with a reference to the document in question in the Weimar Archives, and to Seckendorf, 3, pp. 200, 252.

Joachim, in spite of his sympathies for Lutheranism, had hitherto refrained from formally embracing it, not wishing to come into conflict with the Emperor. In 1539, however, he publicly apostatised, casting to the winds all his earlier promises. As Calvin wrote to Farel, in November, 1539, Joachim had informed the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, his chief tempter, that he had now made up his mind to "accept the Gospel and to exterminate Popery,"[1] and this he did with the best will, though he took no part in the Schmalkalden War against the Emperor. In his case politics and a disinclination to make war on the Emperor were the determining factors.

While Joachim was still quietly pursuing his subversive plans in the March of Brandenburg, the ever-recurring question was already being discussed anew amongst the Lutherans in that quarter, viz. whether Luther had not previously, and with greater justice, declared himself against resistance, and whether he was not therefore hostile to the spirit of the League of Schmalkalden.

A nobleman, Caspar von Kokeritz, probably one of Joachim's advisers, requested Luther to furnish the Protestant preacher at Cottbus, Johann Ludicke, with a fresh opinion on the lawfulness of resistance. The request was justified by the difference between Luther's earlier standpoint—which was well known at Cottbus—and that which he had more recently adopted. From the difficulty Luther sought to escape in a strongly worded letter to Ludicke, dated February 8, 1539, which is in several ways remarkable.[2]

In this letter the lawyers and the Princes again loom very large. They had most emphatically urged the employment of force, and "very strong reasons exist against my opposing this desire and plan of our party." In his earlier memorandum[3] he had been thinking of the Emperor as Emperor, but now he had come to look on him as what he really was, viz. as a mere "hireling" of the Pope. The Pope is desirous of carrying out his "diabolical wickedness" with the help of the Emperor. "Hence, if it is lawful to fight against the Turks and to defend ourselves against them, how much more so against the Pope, who is worse?" Still, he was willing to stand by his earlier opinion, provided only that Pope, Cardinals and Emperor would admit that they were all of them the devil's own servants; "then my

[1] Janssen, "Hist. of the German People," p. 6, 60 f.

[2] "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 87; "Briefe," 5, p. 159.

[3] "That given under the Elector Johann," says Luther, i.e. that of March, 1530 (above, p. 52), in which Luther had declared that armed resistance against the Emperor "can in no way be reconciled with Scripture."

advice will be the same as before, viz. that we yield to the heathen tyrants." Other reasons too had led him, so he says, to discard his previous opinion, but he is loath to commit them to writing for fear lest something might reach the ears of "those abominable ministers of Satan." Instead, he launches out into biblical proofs, urging that the "German Princes," who together with the Emperor governed the realm, "*communi consilio*," had more right to withstand the Emperor than the Jewish people when they withstood Saul, or those others who, in the Old Testament, resisted the authorities, and yet met with the Divine approval. The constitution of the Empire might not be altered by the Emperor, "who is not the monarch," and "least of all in the devil's cause. He may not be aware that it is this cause that he is furthering, but we know for certain that it is. Let what I have said be enough for you, and leave the rest to the teaching of the Spirit. Let your exhortation be to 'render unto the Kaiser the things that are the Kaiser's.' *Ceterum secretum meum mihi.*"[1]

It is not difficult from the above to guess the "secret": it was the impending apostasy of the Electorate of Brandenburg.

Luther had already several times come into contact with Joachim II. The Elector's mother was friendly with him and came frequently to Wittenberg. Concerning her foes Luther once wrote to Jonas: "May the Lord Jesus give me insight and eloquence against the darts of Satan."[2] In his letter of congratulation to the Elector on his apostasy he hints more plainly at the opponents to whom he had referred darkly in his letter to Ludicke: "I am less concerned about the subtlety of the serpents than about the growl of the lion, which perchance, coming from those in high places, may disquiet your Electoral Highness."[3]

When the religious war of Schmalkalden at last broke out, the foes of Wittenberg recalled Luther's biblical admonitions in 1530 against the use of arms in the cause of the Gospel, which Cochlæus had already collected and published. These they caused to be several times reprinted (1546), with the object of showing the injustice of the protesters' attitude by the very words of the Reformer, who had died just before. The Wittenberg theologians replied (1547), but their answer only added to the tangle of the network of evasions. As a counter-blast they printed Luther's later memoranda, or

[1] "Briefe," 5, p. 188. The passage concludes with a translation of the Latin text appended by a later hand.

[2] On June 11, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 165; "Briefe," 5, p. 188.

[3] On December 4, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 313; "Briefe," 5, p. 233.

"Conclusions," in favour of the use of force, adding prefaces by Melanchthon and Bugenhagen; where the prefaces come to deal with the awkward statement made by Luther in 1530, the writers have recourse to the device of questioning its authenticity; this Melanchthon does merely incidentally, Bugenhagen of set purpose.[1] According to Bugenhagen, who, as a matter of fact, had himself assisted in drawing up the statement, it deserved to be relegated to the domain of fiction; Luther's enemies, he says, had fabricated the document in order to injure the Evangel. He even asserted that he could quote Luther's own assurances in this matter; according to Caspar Cruciger, Luther had declared in his presence that the memorandum of 1530 had not "emanated" from him, though "carried the rounds by his enemies." Bugenhagen was unable to understand, so he says, how his own name came to be there, and repeatedly he speaks of the document as the "alleged" letter. He also tells us that he had repudiated it as early as 1531, immediately after its publication by Cochlæus; if this be true, then it is difficult to explain away his denial as due to mere forgetfulness. His statements are altogether at variance with what we are told by the physician, Matth. Ratzeberger, Luther's friend, who was always opposed to the war, and who, in his tract of 1552, "A Warning against Unrighteous Ways," etc., blames Bugenhagen for his repudiation of Luther's authority.[2] From the above it is

[1] Enders, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 245 ff., where he gives extracts from the publication in question. According to him, Luther's friend, J. Menius, also introduces the memorandum with the words: "An old writing *said to be* by the Reverend D. M. L." "On self-defence," 1547.

[2] The tract is printed by Hortleder, "Von den Ursachen des deutschen Krieges," 2, Gotha, 1645, p. 39 ff., and the passage in question (p. 50) runs: "D. Pommer and Melanchthon have repudiated D. Martin's counsels to the Elector Johann . . . in a public writing, and not only declare that they are not D. Martin's but have condemned them as false, and contrary to the plain truth of God's Word." P. Wappler, "Inquisition und Ketzerprozesse in Zwickau zur Reformationszeit," Leipzig, 1908, p. 134, says: "Naturally the repudiation of this memorandum of Luther's of March, 1530, on the part of theologians of the standing of Melanchthon and Bugenhagen, who had actually sanctioned it themselves, was not of a nature to enhance the reputations of those theologians amongst such as had read Luther's early writings on the behaviour to be observed towards the secular authority." Cp. O. Clemen, "Bemerkungen zu Luthers Rathschlag an Kurfürst Johann von Sachsen vom 6. März 1530," in "Theol. Studien und Kritiken," 1909, p. 471 ff.

evident that we have no right to praise Bugenhagen, as has been done in modern days, "for the fire with which he was wont to advocate the truth." Regarding Melanchthon's love of truth we shall have more to say later.

On looking back over the various statements made by Luther concerning armed resistance, we cannot fail to be struck by their diversity; the testimony they afford is the reverse of favourable to their author's consistency and honesty.

By his very nature Luther felt himself drawn to proclaim the right of armed resistance in the cause of the Evangel. Of this feeling we have indications even at an early date in certain unguarded outbursts which were repeated at intervals in such a way as to leave no doubt as to his real views. Yet, until 1530, his official and public statements, particularly to the Princes, speak quite a different language. The divergence was there and it was impossible to get rid of it either by explanation or by denial. As soon as things seemed about to lead inevitably to war, Luther saw that the time had come to cast moderation to the winds. He was unwilling to sacrifice his whole life-work, and the protesting Estates had no intention of relinquishing their new rights and privileges. Formerly it had seemed advisable and serviceable to the spread of the Evangel to clothe it in the garb of submissiveness to the supreme authority of the Empire and of patient endurance for the sake of truth, but, after the Diet of Augsburg such considerations no longer held good. Overcoming whatever hesitation he still felt, Luther yielded to the urgings of the secular politicians.

From that time his memoranda assumed a different character. At the commencement of the change their wording betrays the difficulties with which Luther found himself faced when called upon to reconcile his later with his earlier views. It was, however, not long before his combative temper completely got the better of his scruples in Luther's writings and letters.

Nothing is more unhistorical than to imagine that his guiding idea was "By the Word only," in the sense of deprecating all recourse to earthly weapons and desiring that the Word should prevail simply by its own inherent strength. He had spoken out his real mind when he said, in

1522: "Every power must yield to the Evangel, whether willingly or unwillingly," and again, in 1530, "Let things take their course . . . even though it come to war or revolt." Only on these lines can we explain his action. His firm conviction of his own Divine mission (below, xvi.) confirms this assumption.

### 4. The Turks Without and the Turks [Papists] Within the Empire

The stupendous task of repelling the onslaught of the Turkish power, which had cost Western Christendom such great sacrifices in the past, was, at the commencement of the third decade of the sixteenth century, the most pressing one for both Hungary and the German Empire.

Sultan Suleiman the Second's lust for conquest had, since 1520, become a subject of the gravest misgivings in the West. With the help of his countless warlike hordes he had, in 1521, taken Belgrad, the strong outpost of the Christian powers, and, after a terrible struggle, on December 25 of the following year, captured from the Knights of St. John the strategically so important island of Rhodes. There now seemed every likelihood of these victories being followed up. The Kingdom of Hungary, which so long and gloriously had stemmed the inroads of the infidel into Christendom, now felt itself unable to cope single-handed with the enemy and accordingly appealed to the Emperor for help.

At the Diet of Nuremberg, in 1524, the Imperial Abschied of April 18 held out a promise of assistance in the near future, and even instanced tentatively the means to be adopted by the Empire. In the meantime appeals were to be made to the other Christian powers for help, so that the final resolutions concerning the plan of defence might be discussed and settled at the Spires Convention on November 11 of the same year.

Luther thought it his duty to interfere in these preparations.

#### *Against Assistance for the Turkish War.*

The Diet of Nuremberg had re-enacted the Edict of Worms against Luther. It had requested the Pope to summon a

" free, general Council " in some suitable spot in Germany[1] " in order that good may not be overborne by evil, and that true believers and subjects of Christ may be brought to a firm belief in a common faith." Incensed by the renewal of the Edict of Worms against his doctrine and person, Luther at once published an angry work, " Zwey keyserliche uneynige und wydderwertige Gepott " (1524),[2] in which he declared himself against the granting of any help whatever against the Turks.

He begins by saying of the authors of the new decree against Lutheranism, that surely even " pigs and donkeys could see how blindly and obstinately they were acting ; it is abominable that the Emperor and the Princes should openly deal in lies." After a lengthy discussion of the decree, he comes to the question of the help which was so urgently needed in order to repel the Turks ; he says : " Finally I beg of you all, dear Christians, that you will join in praying to God for those miserable, blinded Princes, whom no doubt God Himself has placed over us as a curse, that we may not follow them against the Turks, or give money for this undertaking ; for the Turks are ten times cleverer and more devout than are our Princes. How can such fools, who tempt and blaspheme God so greatly, expect to be successful against the Turks ? "[3]

His chief reason for refusing help against the Turks was the blasphemy against God of which the Princes of the Empire, and the Emperor, had rendered themselves guilty by withstanding his Evangel.

He declares, " I would ten times rather be dead than listen to such blasphemy and insolence against the Divine Majesty. . . . God deliver us from them, and give us, in His mercy, other rulers. Amen."—The Emperor himself he charges with presumption for daring—agreeably with age-long custom—to style himself the chief Protector of the Christian faith. " Shamelessly does the Emperor boast of this, he who is after all but a perishable bag of worms, and not sure of his life for one moment." The Divine power of the faith has surely no need of a protector, he says ; he scoffs at him and at the King of England, who styles himself Defender of the Faith ; would that all pious Christians " would take pity upon such mad, foolish, senseless, raving, witless fools."[4]

[1] Cp. Janssen-Pastor, $2^{18}$, p. 355 ff. The passage in question is also reprinted in Luther's " Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 273 f. ; Erl. ed., $24^{2}$, p. 241 f.

[2] Janssen " Hist. of the German People " (Eng. Trans.), 4, p. 40 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 41. In Köstlin-Kawerau also (1, p. 600) it is pointed out that Luther " warns against any compliance with the [Emperor's] call."

[4] *Ibid.*

Even in the midst of the storm caused by his Indulgence Theses, Luther had already opposed the lending of any assistance against the Turks. A sermon preached in the winter of 1518, in which he took this line, was circulated[1] by his friends. When Spalatin enquired of him in the Elector's name whether the Turkish War—for which Cardinal Cajetan was just then asking for help—could be justified by Holy Scripture, Luther replied, that the contrary could be proved from many passages; that the Bible was full of the unhappy results of wars undertaken in reliance on human means; that those wars alone were successful where heaven fought for the people; that now it was impossible to count upon victory in view of the corruption of Christendom and the tyranny and the hostility to Christ displayed by the Roman Church; on the contrary, God was fighting against them;[2] He must first be propitiated by tears, prayer, amendment of life and a pure faith. In the Resolutions on the Indulgence Theses we find the same antipathy to the war, again justified on similar mystical and polemical grounds.

His words in the Resolutions were even embodied by Rome in one of the propositions condemned on the proclamation of the ban: "To fight against the Turks is to withstand God, Who is using them for the punishment of our sins."[3]

When, later, he came to approve of and advocate the war against the Turks, he declared, quite frankly: "I am open to confess that such an article was mine, and was advanced and defended by me in the past."

He adds that he would be ready to defend it even now were things in the same state as then.—But where did he discern any difference? According to him, people then, before he had instructed them concerning its origin and office, had no idea of what secular authority really was. "Princes and lords who desired to be pious, looked upon their position and office as of no account, not as being the service of God, and became mere

[1] "*Ne susciperetur ullo modo bellum huiusmodi.*" Cp. Luther to Spalatin, December 21, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 333.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Propos., 34. Denzinger, "Enchiridion"[9], p. 178. P. Kalkoff, "Forschungen zu Luthers römischem Prozess," 1905, seeks the actual source of the proposition condemned. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 352, merely quotes the passage from the Resolutions in which Luther incidentally speaks of the "Great lords in the Church," "who dream of nothing but war against the Turks [for which purpose the Pope was at that time imposing taxes], and, instead of fighting sin, withstand God's chastisement for sin and thus resist God Himself."

priests and monks." But then he had written his "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt" (1523). Having re-instated the secular authority, so long "smothered and neglected," he was loath to see it summoned against the Turks by the Pope. Besides, he is quite confident that the Pope had never been in earnest about the Turkish War; his real aim was to enrich his exchequer.[1]

Luther also explains that from the first he had been inclined to oppose the granting of any aid against the Turks on the theological ground embodied in his condemned proposition, viz. that God visits our sins upon us by means of the Turks. Here again he will not admit himself to have been in the wrong, for Christians must "endure wrong, violence or injustice . . . not resist evil, but allow and suffer all things" as the Gospel teaches. Characteristically enough, he appeals to that "piece of Christian doctrine" according to which the Christian is to offer his left cheek to him who smites him on the right, and leave his cloak to the man who takes away his coat. Now, what our Lord taught in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 39 f.), was not, as he had already pointed out, a mere counsel of perfection, but a real command; but the "Pope with his schools and convents had made of this a counsel which it was permissible not to keep, and which a Christian might neglect, and had thus distorted the words of Christ, taught the whole world a falsehood, and cheated Christians."[2] A way out of the fatal consequences which must ensue, Luther fancies he is able to find in the distinction between the true Christian and mere worldly citizen; it was not incumbent on the latter to perform everything that was binding on the former.

Previous to writing his "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt," referred to above, he had again publicly expressed himself as opposed to the efforts of the Empire on behalf of the Turkish War; though no longer because the authorities lacked a right sense of their office, or because Christ's counsel made submission a duty, but for quite another reason: Before taking any steps against the Turks it was necessary to resist the impious dominion of the Pope, compared with which the danger from the Turks paled into insignificance. "To what purpose is it," he wrote in 1522, "to oppose the Turk? What harm does the Turk do? He invades a country and becomes its secular ruler. . . . The Turk also leaves each one free to believe as he pleases." In both respects the Pope is worse; his invasions are more extensive, and, at the same time, he slays the souls, so that "as regards both body and soul the government of the Pope is ten times

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 108 f.; Erl. ed., 31, p. 34 f. "On the Turkish War," 1529.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 110=35 f.

worse than that of the Turk. . . . If ever the Turks were to be exterminated it would be necessary first to begin with the Pope." The Christian method of withstanding the Turks would be to "preach the Gospel to them."[1] This paved the way for his warning, in 1524, against complying with the Emperor's call for assistance in fighting the Turks (above, p. 77).

Such exhortations not to wage war against the Turks naturally tended to confuse the multitude to the last degree.

Incautious Lutheran preachers also did their share in stirring up high and low against the burden of taxes imposed by the wars. Hence it was quite commonly alleged against the instigator of the religious innovations that, mainly owing to his action after the Diet of Spires, there was a general reluctance to grant the necessary supplies, though the clouds on the eastern horizon of the Empire were growing ever blacker. After the horrible disaster at Mohacz, in 1526, Luther therefore found it necessary to exculpate himself before the public.

### *In Favour of Assistance for the Turkish War.*

Luther gradually arrived at the decision that it was his duty to put his pen at the service of the war against the Turks.

A change took place in his attitude similar to that which had occurred in 1525 at the time of the Peasant Rising, which his words, and those of the Reformed preachers, had done not a little to further.

His friends, he says in 1529, "because the Turk was now so near," had insisted on his finishing a writing against them which had already been commenced; "more particularly because of some unskilful preachers among us Germans, who, I regret to learn, are teaching the people that they must not fight against the Turks." Some, he writes, also taught, that "it was not becoming for any Christian to wield the sword"; others went so far as to look forward to the coming of the Turks and their rule. "And such error and malice amongst the people is all placed at Luther's door, as the fruit of my Evangel; in the same way that I had to bear the blame of the revolt [of the peasants]. . . . Hence I am under the necessity of writing on the matter and of exculpating us, both for my own sake and for that of the Evangel . . . in order that innocent consciences may

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 708 f.; Erl. ed., $24^2$, p. 18; "Bul of the Evening Feed of our most Holy Lord the Pope."

not continue to be deceived by such calumnies, and be rendered suspicious of me and my teaching, or be wrongly led to believe that they must not fight against the Turks."[1]

In February, 1528, Sulciman II. was in a position to demand that King Ferdinand should evacuate Buda-Pesth, the capital; it was already feared that his threat of visiting Ferdinand in Austria might be all too speedily fulfilled. The Sultan actually commenced, in the spring of 1529, his great campaign, which brought him to the very walls of Vienna. The city, however, defended itself with such heroism that the enemy was at last compelled to withdraw.

In April, 1529, when the reports of the danger which menaced Austria had penetrated throughout the length and breadth of Germany, Luther at last published the writing above referred to, viz. "On the Turkish War."

The booklet he dedicated to that zealous patron of the Reformation, Landgrave Philip of Hesse. In it his intention is to teach "how to fight with a good conscience." He points out how the Emperor, as a secular ruler, must, agreeably with the office conferred on him by God, protect his subjects against the Turks, as against murderers and robbers, with the secular sword, which, however, has nothing to do with the faith. There were two who must wage the war, Christian and Charles; but Christian's duty was merely that of the faithful everywhere who would pray for the success of the campaign; this was all that the believers, as such, had to do; Charles would fight, because the example of Charles the Great would encourage him to bear the sword bravely, but only against the Turks as robbers and disturbers of the peace; it would be no Crusade, such as had been undertaken against the infidel in the foolish days of old. Amongst the most powerful pages of the work are those in which, regardless of flattery, he impresses on the German Princes the need of union, of sacrifice of private interests and of obedience to the guidance of the Emperor, without which it was useless to hope for anything in the present critical condition of the Empire. He scourges with a like severity certain faults into which Germans were prone to fall when engaged in warfare, viz. to under-estimate the strength of the enemy, and to neglect following up their victories; instead of this, they would sit down and tipple until they again found themselves in straits.[2]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 107 f.; Erl. ed., 31, p. 32 f. "On the Turkish War." "I fear that Germany will fall to the Turks. But I, poor Luther, am supposed to be to blame for everything; even the Peasant Revolt and the denial of the Sacrament are laid to my charge." "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 405. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 392, and Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 127.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 107 ff.; Erl. ed., 31, p. 32 ff.

It does not, however, seem that these words of Luther's on behalf of the war against the Turks raised any great enthusiasm among the people.

He again took up his pen, and this time more open-heartedly, when, on October 14, the hour of Vienna's deliverance came and the last assault had been happily repulsed. The result was his "Heer-Predigt widder den Türcken" addressed to all the Germans. Here he sought to instruct them from Scripture concerning the Turks and the approaching Last Day. In stirring, homely words he exhorted them to rise and lend their assistance, pointing out that whoever fell in the struggle died a martyr. He fired the enthusiasm of his readers by even quoting the examples of the women and maidens in olden Germany. He also dwelt on the need of preserving the faith in captivity should it be the lot of any of the combatants to be taken prisoner, and even exhorted those who might be sold as slaves not to prove unfaithful by running away from their lawful masters. He consoled his readers at the same time with the thought, to which he ever attached such importance, that, after all, in Turkey the devil did not rage nearly so furiously against Christians as the devil at home, i.e. the Pope, who was forcing them to deny Christ.[1]

We likewise find attacks on the Catholic fraction of the German nation, mingled with exhortations to resist the Turks, in a Preface he composed in 1530, on the occasion of the republication of an older work dating from Catholic times, "On the Morals and Religion of the Turks."[2]

The struggle raging in the heart of Germany, and the opposition of the Protestant Princes and Estates to the Emperor as head of the Realm, constituted the greatest obstacle to any scheme for united and vigorous action against the Turks. Hence to some extent Luther was indirectly responsible for the growth of the Ottoman Empire. On one occasion Luther gave vent to the following outburst: "Would that we Germans stood shoulder to shoulder, then it would be easy for us to resist the Turk. If we had 50,000 foot and 10,000 horse constantly in the field . . . we could

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 160 ff. = 80 ff. The Turk as a "Maker of Martyrs," p. 175 = 96.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 205 ff.; Erl. ed., 65, p. 248 ff. "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 514 *seq.*

well withstand them and defend ourselves."[1] "The Sultan had, long before, taken into his calculations the dissensions created by Luther in the Empire."[2] On one occasion, about 1532, as we know from Luther's "Talk Table," Suleiman made enquiries of a German named Schmaltz, who was attached to an embassy, concerning Luther's circumstances, and asked how old he was. To the answer that he was forty-eight years of age he replied: "I would he were still younger, for he would find a gracious master in me." Luther, when this was reported to him, made the sign of the cross and said: "May God preserve me from such a gracious master."[3]

Luther, as we shall see below, had occasion to write against the Turks even at a later date. His writings had, however, no widespread influence; they were read only by one portion of the German nation, being avoided by the rest as works of an arch-heretic. Many marvelled at his audacity in presuming to teach the whole nation, and at his speaking as though he had been the leader of the people. Catholics were inclined, as Luther himself complains, to regard the growth of the Turkish power as God's chastisement for the apostasy of a part of Germany and for the Emperor's remissness in the matter of heresy.

Even in his very tracts against the Turks, Luther did much to weaken the force of his call to arms. His aim should have been to inspire the people with enthusiasm and a readiness to sacrifice themselves, which might, in turn, have encouraged and fired the nobles; but, as the experience of earlier ages had already proved, religion alone was able to produce such a change in the temper of a nation. Protection for the common, spiritual heritage, defence of the religion and civilisation of the West, such was the only appeal which could have fired people's minds. And it was this banner which the Church unfurled, both before and after Luther's day, which had led to victory at the battle of Lepanto and again at the raising of the siege of Vienna. Luther, on the contrary, in his writing of 1529, repels so vehemently any idea of turning the contest with the infidel into a crusade, that he even has it that, "were I a soldier and

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 396 f. "Table-Talk."
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 283.
[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 397.

descried on the field of battle a priestly banner, or one bearing a cross, or even a crucifix, I would turn and run as though the devil were at my heels; and, if, by God's Providence, they nevertheless gained the victory, still I should take no share in the booty or the triumph."[1]

To insure a favourable issue to the campaign it was also necessary that the position of the Emperor as head of Christendom should be recognised, and the feeling of common interest between the sovereigns and nations be kindled anew. Yet the progress of the innovations, and Luther's own menacing attitude towards the Empire and the Catholic sovereigns, was contributing largely to shatter both the authority of the Empire and the old European unity, not to speak of the injury done to the Papal authority, to whose guidance the common welfare of Christendom had formerly been confided.

Luther allowed his polemics to blunt entirely the effect of his summons. As, however, what he says affords us an insight into the working of his mind, it is of interest to the psychologist.

In the second of the two writings referred to above, the "Heer-Predigt," despite the general excellence of its contents, the constant harping on the nearness of the Last Day could not fail to exert an influence the reverse of that desired. At the very commencement he ventilates his views on the prophecies of Daniel; he likewise will have it that the prophecy concerning Gog and Magog in Ezechiel also refers to the Turks, and that we even read of them in the Apocalypse; their victories portended the end of all things. His last warnings run as follows: "In the end it will come about that the devil will attack Christendom with all his might and from every side. . . . Therefore let us watch and be valiant in a firm faith in Christ, and let each one be obedient to the authorities and see what God will do, leaving things to take their course; for there is nothing good to be hoped for any more."[2] Such pessimism was scarcely calculated to awaken enthusiasm.

Nor does he conceal his fears lest a successful campaign against the Turks should lead the Emperor and the Catholic Princes to turn their arms against the Evangelicals, in order to carry out the Edict of Worms. He so frequently betrays this apprehension that we might almost be led to think that he regarded the Turkish peril as a welcome impediment, did we not know on the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 115; Erl. ed., 31, p. 40. "On the Turkish War."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 196=119. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden" (ed. Kroker), p. 149: "*Ego credo Turcicum regnum non posse vi opprimi*" (a. 1540).

other hand how greatly he came to dread it as he advanced in years. This anxiety concerning possible intentions of the Catholics he felt so keenly in 1529 as to append to the second of his tracts on the Turkish War a peculiarly inappropriate monition, viz. that Germans "must not allow themselves to be made use of against the Evangel, or fight against or persecute Christians; for thus they would become guilty of innocent blood and be no better than the Turks. . . . In such a case no subject is in the least bound to obey the authorities, in fact, where this occurs, all authority is abrogated."[1]

Injudicious considerations such as these are also to be found in the earlier tract; here, however, what is most astonishing is his obstinacy in re-affirming his earlier doctrine, already condemned by Rome, viz. that it was not becoming in Christians, as such, to resist the Turk by force of arms, seeing that God was using the Turks for the chastisement of Christendom. "As we refuse to learn from Scripture," he says, speaking in his wonted mystical tone, "the Turk must teach us with the sword, until we learn by sad experience that Christians must not fight or resist evil. Fools' backs must be dusted with the stick."[2] He also expresses his misgivings because "Christians and Princes are so greatly urged, driven and incited to attack the Turks and fall upon them, before we have amended our own lives and begun to live as true Christians"; on this account "war was not to be recommended."[3] Real amendment would have consisted in accepting the Lutheran Evangel. Yet, instead of embracing Lutheranism, "our Princes are negotiating how best to molest Luther and the Evangel; there, surely, is the real Turk."[4] Because they had ordered fasts, and penitential practices, and Masses of the Holy Ghost, in order to implore God's protection against the Turk, the Catholic Princes drew down upon themselves the following rebuke: "Shall God be gracious to you, faithless rulers of unfortunate subjects! What devil urges you to make such a fuss about spiritual matters, which are not your business, but concern God and the conscience alone, and to do the work God has committed to you and which does concern you and your poor people, so lazily and slothfully even in this time of the direst need, thus merely hindering those who would fain give you their help?"[5]

Here again he was promoting dissension, indeed, generally speaking, his exhortations were more a hindrance than a help; again and again he insists on entangling himself anew in his polemics against Popery, and this in spite of the urgent needs of Germany. Led by the Pope, the Catholic Princes have become

[1] "Werke," *ibid.*, p. 197=121.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 113=39. Even the taking of Rome in 1527 proves the proposition which the Pope had condemned. "Christ has determined to teach them to understand my Article, that Christians must not fight; the condemned Article is now avenged" (p. 115=41).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 111=36.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 148=79. At the Diet of Spires in 1529.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 148=79.

"our tyrants," who "imprison us, exercise compulsion, banish and burn us, behead and drown us and treat us worse than do the Turks."[1]

"In short, wherever we go, the devil, our real landlord, is at home. If we visit the Turk, we find the devil; if we remain under the rule of the Pope, we fall into hell. There is nothing but devils on either side and everywhere." Thus it must be with mankind, he says, referring to 2 Timothy iii. 1, when the world reaches its end.[2]

In "what manner I advise war on the Turk, this my booklet shall be witness."[3]

Cochlæus, Luther's opponent, collected the contradictions contained in the latter's statements on the Turkish War, and published them in 1529 at Leipzig in the form of an amusing Dialogue. In this work one of the characters, Lutherus, attacks the war in Luther's own words, the second, Palinodus, defends it, again with Lutheran phrases, whilst an ambassador of King Ferdinand plays the part of the interested enquirer. The work instances fifteen "contradictions."[4]

Luther personally acted wisely, for it was of the utmost importance to him to destroy the impression that he stood in the way of united action against the Turks. This the Princes and Estates who protested at the Diet of Spires were far less willing to do. They cast aside all scruple and openly refused to lend their assistance against the Turks unless the enactment against the religious innovations were rescinded. It is true that Vienna was then not yet in any

[1] "Werke," p. 195=118. This he continued to assert to the very end of his life. In 1545 he writes: "The Turk also seduces the world, but he does not sit in the Temple of God, does not take the name of Christ and St. Peter . . . but this destroyer in our midst pretends to be a friend, wants to be styled father, and is twice as bad as the Turk. This is the abomination of desolation," etc. "Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 211. "Wider das Bapstum zu Rom, vom Teuffel gestifft."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 195=119.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 148=79. It is impossible to concur in the unconditional praise usually bestowed upon Luther by Protestants on account of his attitude in the midst of the Turkish peril. It was even said that he gave expression in powerful language, and without any thought of personal interest, to what God required "of every Christian and every German" in this emergency. Nor is it correct to state "that the contradiction with his later views was merely apparent" when he expressed himself at first as against the campaign. How real the contradiction is can be seen not only from the above and from what follows, but also from his later recommendations based on religious motives in favour of the war. Thus he says in the "Vermanunge zum Gebet wider den Türcken" of the year 1541 (see vol. v., xxxiv. 2): "We are fighting to preserve God's Word and His Church," etc. ("Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 95 f.).

[4] "Dialogus de bello contra Turcas, in antilogias Lutheri."

pressing danger, though, on the other hand, news had been received at Spires that the Turkish fleet was cruising off the coasts of Sicily. It was only later on in the year, when the danger of Austria and for the German Princes began to increase, that the Protesters showed signs of relenting. They also saw that, just then, their refusal to co-operate would be of no advantage to the new Church. Landgrave Philip of Hesse nevertheless persisted in his obstinate refusal to take any part in the defence of the Empire.

Philip made several attempts to induce Brück, the Chancellor of the Saxon Electorate, and Luther, to bring their influence to bear on the Elector Johann Frederick so that he might take a similar line. Brück was sufficiently astute to avoid making any promise. Luther did not venture openly to refuse, though his position as principal theological adviser would have qualified him to explain to the Landgrave the error of his way. In his reply he merely finds fault with the "Priesthood," who "are so obstinate and defiant and trust in the Emperor and in human aid." God's assistance against the Turks may be reckoned on, but if it came to the point, and he were obliged to speak to the Elector, he would "advise for the best," and, may God's Will be done.[1]

When the Turks, in order to avenge the defeat they had suffered before the walls of Vienna, prepared for further attacks upon the West, frightful rumours began to spread throughout Germany, adding greatly to Luther's trouble of mind. At the Coburg, where he then was, gloomy forebodings of the coming destruction of Germany at the hand of the Turk associated themselves with other disquieting considerations.

In one of his first letters from the Coburg he says to Melanchthon, Spalatin and Lindemann, who were then at the Diet of Augsburg: "My whole soul begins to revolt against the Turks and Mohammed, for I see the intolerable wrath of Satan who rages so proudly against the souls and bodies of men. I shall pray and weep and never rest until heaven hears my cry. You [at Augsburg] are suffering persecution from our monsters at home, but we have been chosen to witness and to suffer both woes [viz. Catholicism and the Turks] which are raging together and making their final onslaught. The onslaught itself proves

[1] On December 16, 1529, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 205. For Brück's reply, cp. Hassencamp, "Hessische Kirchengesch.," 1, p. 215, 1.

and foretells their approaching end and our salvation."[1]—"All we now await is the coming of Christ," so he says on another occasion in one of his fits of fear; "verily, I fear the Turk will traverse it [Germany] from end to end. . . . How often do I think of the plight of our German land, how often do I sweat, because it will not hear me."[2]

Lost in his eschatological dream and misled by his morbid apprehension, he wrote his Commentary on Ezechiel xxxviii.–xxxix., which was at once placed in the hands of the printer; here again he finds the mischief to be wrought by the Turks at the end of the world as plainly foretold as in the prophecy of Daniel, the Commentary on which he had published shortly before.[3]

Everywhere anxiety reigned supreme, for there were lacking both preparedness and unanimity. The Catholic Princes of the Empire were not much better than the rest. Petty interests and jealousies outweighed in many instances a sense of the common needs. At Spires, for instance, Duke George of Saxony stipulated, as a condition of any promise of assistance, that he should be given precedence over both the Dukes of Bavaria. While the Catholic Estates agreed, at the Diet of Augsburg, to the grants for the war against the Turks, the Protestant Estates were not to be induced to give a favourable decision until the Emperor had sanctioned the so-called religious Peace of Nuremberg in 1532.[4]

In the summer of that same year Suleiman passed Buda-Pesth with 300,000 men. Thence he continued his march along the Danube with the intention of taking Vienna, this time at any cost. The Emperor Charles V. hurried in person to command the great army which was collecting near Vienna; the Sultan was to be encountered and a decisive battle fought. Throughout the Empire the greatest enthusiasm for the cause prevailed. The Electoral Prince, Joachim of Brandenburg, was nominated by the Emperor to the command of the troops of the Saxon lowlands, since this country had not been unanimous in the choice of a Captain, probably owing to the religious dissensions.

[1] To Melanchthon, April 23, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 303. At the end are greetings to the two other friends referred to. The latter would inform the Elector of the anxieties and prayers of the writer.

[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 396.

[3] On Ezechiel xxxviii.–xxxix., "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 219 ff., Erl. ed., 41, p. 220 ff. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 200.

[4] Cp. A. Westermann, "Die Türkenhilfe und die politisch-kirchlichen Parteien auf dem Reichstag zu Regensburg 1532," Heidelberg, 1910.

The Protestant Prince Joachim requested a pious letter from Luther. This Luther sent him, promising him his prayers, and saying that "he would take the field in spirit with his dear Emperor Carol [as he now calls him], and fight under his banner against Satan and his members." He prayed God to bestow on them all "a glad spirit," granting them not to trust in their own strength, but to fight with the "fear of God, trusting in His Grace alone," and to ascribe the honour to heaven only; hitherto there had been too much of the "spirit of defiance on both sides," and each party had gone into the field "without God," "which on every occasion had been worse for the people of God than for the enemy." Luther was evidently quite incapable of writing on the subject without his polemical ideas casting their shadow over his field of vision.

The Turks did not venture to give battle, but, to the joy of the Christian army, retreated, laying waste Styria on their march. The Imperial troops were disbanded and an armistice was concluded between King Ferdinand and Suleiman. But in 1536 the hostilities were renewed by the Turks; Hungary was as good as lost, and in 1537 Ferdinand's army suffered in Slavonia the worst reverse, so at least Luther was informed, since the battle of Mohacz in 1526. On the strength of a rumour he attributed the misfortune to the treason of the Christian generals. In his conversations he set down the defeat to the account of Ferdinand, his zealous Catholic opponent; he had permitted "such a great and powerful army to be led miserably into the jaws of the Turks."[1] Ferdinand, the Emperor's brother, was, of course, to blame for the unfortunate issue of the affair; "hitherto the Turk has been provoked by Ferdinand and has been victorious; when he comes unprovoked, then he will succumb and be defeated; if the Papists commence the war they will be beaten."[2] "Luther saw in the misfortune of King Ferdinand a just punishment on him and his friends who angered God and worshipped lies."[3] He believed the cause of the success of the Turks to be the "great blasphemy of the Papists against God and the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 389. Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 405, concerning the news of an impending attack by the Turks in 1538: "I look upon it as a fresh invention of Ferdinand's; he is planning another tax such as he devised before."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 401.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 401.

abominable sin against one and the other Table of the Commandments of God"; also "the great contempt of God's Word amongst our own people."[1]

While the Protestant Princes and cities again showed a tendency to exploit the Turkish peril to the advantage of the religious innovations, Luther, in view of the needs of the time, pulled himself together and, when consulted, openly advised the Elector Johann Frederick to give his assistance against the Turks should this be asked of him. (May 29, 1538.[2])

He writes to the Elector: "'*Necessitas*' knows no '*legem*,' and where there is necessity everything that is termed law, treaty or agreement ceases. . . . We must risk both good and evil with our brothers, like good comrades, as man and wife, father and children risk all things together." "Because many pious and honest people will also have to suffer," it was meet that the Prince should, "with a good conscience, render assistance in order to help and protect, not the tyrants, but the poor little flock."

Yet, immediately after, he deprives his counsel of most of its weight by declaring in fatalistic language, that there was nevertheless little to be hoped for, since God "had fashioned the rod which they will not be able to resist."

He tells him concerning King Ferdinand, "that there was nothing to be anticipated from him, but only trouble and inevitable misfortune"; of the Catholics in general he assures him, that their "blasphemy" against the Evangel and their resistance to "their conscience and the known truth" made it impossible for them to escape a "great chastisement," since "God liveth and reigneth."

Again, as though desirous of deterring the Elector on personal grounds, he reminds him that they (the "tyrants" as he calls the Princes of the Catholic party) "had not so far even requested assistance, and had not been willing to agree to peace though the need was so great."[3] He also thoughtfully alludes to the danger lest the tyrants, after having secured a victory with the help of the Protestants, should make use of their arms to overthrow the Evangel by force: "We must be wary lest, should our adversaries vanquish the Turks—which I cannot believe they will—they then turn their arms against us," "which they would gladly do"; but, he adds, "it rests in God's hands not in their desire, what they do to us, or what we are to suffer, as we have experienced so far," for instance after the retreat of the Turks from Vienna when, "after all, nothing was undertaken against us";

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 393.

[2] *Ibid.*, 55, p. 202 ("Briefwechsel," 11, p. 370).

[3] On Ferdinand's reason for not seeking the Elector's help, see Enders on the letter referred to, p. 371.

for the people would refuse to follow them in any attack upon the Evangel.

This letter, which has frequently been appealed to by Protestants as a proof of Luther's pure, unselfish patriotism, is a strange mixture of contradictory thoughts and emotions, the product of a mind not entirely sure of its ground and influenced by all sorts of political considerations. Of one thing alone was the writer certain, viz. that the Turk at Rome must be fought against relentlessly.

Luther's "Table-Talk" and occasional letters supply various traits to complete the above picture of his attitude towards the Turkish War. There we find polemical outbursts interspersed with excellent admonitions to prayer,[1] confutations of the errors of the Turks, and lamentations on the judgment of God as displayed in these wars.

### *Luther on Turks and Papists.*

"If Germany had a master," he says very aptly on one occasion, "it would be easy for us to withstand the Turk"; but, he continues, "the Papists are our worst foes, and would prefer to see Germany laid waste, and this the Turk is desirous of doing."[2] The Papists are actually trying to establish the domination of the Turk. "The Pope," so he was informed, "refuses, like the King of France, to grant any assistance to the Emperor against the Turks. See the enormities of our day! And yet this is the money [which the Pope refused to give] that the Popes have been heaping up for so many long ages by means of their Indulgences."[3] "I greatly fear," he says to his friends, "the alliance between the Papists and the Turks by which they intend to bring us to ruin. God grant that my prophecy may prove false. . . . If this enters the heads of the Papists, they will do it, for the malice of the devil is incredible . . . they will plot and scheme how to betray us and deliver us over into the hands of the Turk."[4]

Meanwhile he believes that God is fighting for his cause by rendering the Turks victorious: "See how often the Papists with their hatred of the Evangel and their trust in the Emperor have been set at nought"; they had reckoned on the destruction of the Lutherans by means of Charles the Fifth's victory over France, but, lo, "a great French army marches against the Emperor, Italy falls away and the Turk attacks Germany; this

[1] Cp., for instance, Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 257: "Pray! *Quia non est spes amplius in armis, sed in Deo.* If anyone is to beat the Turk, it will surely be the little children, who say the Our Father," etc. (1542).

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 394.

[3] To Amsdorf, June 13, 1532, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 196.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 396. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 406.

means that God has dispersed the proud. Ah, my good God, it is Thou Who hast done this thing!"[1]—On one occasion he declared: "In order that it might be discerned and felt that God was not with us in the war against the Turks, He has never inspired our Princes with sufficient courage and spirit earnestly to set about the Turkish War. . . . Nowhere is anything determined upon or carried out. . . . Why is this? In order that my Article, which Pope Leo condemned, may remain ever true and uncondemned."[2]

When, in the spring of 1532, Rome itself stood in fear of the Turk and many even took to flight, a letter reached Wittenberg announcing the consternation which prevailed there in the Eternal City. Then probably it was that Luther spoke the words which have been transmitted in both the Latin and German versions of the "Table-Talk": "Should the Turk advance against Rome, I shall not regret it. For we read in the Prophet Daniel: 'He shall fix his tabernacle between the seas upon a glorious and holy mountain.'" The two seas he imagined to be the Tyrrhenean and the Adriatic, whilst the holy mountain meant Rome, "for Rome is holy on account of the many Saints who are buried there. This is true, for the abomination which is the Pope, was [according to Daniel ix. 27] to take up its abode in the holy city. If the Turk reaches Rome, then the Last Day is certainly not far off."[3]

It would even seem that it was his fervent desire to see Antichrist ousted by the Turk which allured him into the obscure region of biblical prophecy.

"Accordingly I hope for the end of the world. The Emperor Charles and Solimannus represent the last dregs of worldly domination. Christ will come, for Scripture knows nothing of any other monarchy, and the signs of the end of the world are already visible."[4] "The rule of the Turk was foretold in Daniel and in the Apocalypse that the pious might not allow themselves to be terrified at his greatness. The prophecy of Daniel gives us a splendid account of what is to happen till the end of the world, and describes clearly the reign of Antichrist and of the Turk."[5] Finally, Luther is of opinion that at the end of the world both

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 399.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 113; Erl. ed., 31, p. 39. "On the Turkish War," 1529. "The angels are arming themselves for the fight and are determined to overthrow the Turk, together with the Pope, and to cast them both into hell" (1540). Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 244.

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, p. 395 *seq.*; "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 379. Other instances of the hatred which caused him to compare Pope with Turk are to be found in the "Table-Talk" ed. by Kroker, according to the collection of Mathesius: "*Propter crudelitatem*, Philippus [Melanchthon] is hostile to the Turk . . . but Philippus is not yet sufficiently angry with the Pope," p. 307 (1542–1543). "*Deus hunc articulum (incarnationis) defendit hodie contra Turcam et papam semperque miraculis approbat*," p. 94 (1540).

[4] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 401. [5] *Ibid.*, 403.

must be united, viz. the Papal Antichrist and the Turk, because both had come into being together. About the time of the Emperor Phocas († 610) Mohammed appeared on the scene of history, and at that very time too the Bishops of Rome arrogated to themselves the primacy over the whole Church.[1]

His pseudo-mysticism and factious temper thus continued to play an unmistakable part in his ideas concerning the Turk.[2]

"Against such might and power [the Turkish] we Germans behave like pot-bellied pigs, we idle about, gorge, tipple and gamble, and commit all kinds of wantonness and roguery, heedless of all the great and pitiful slaughters and defeats which our poor German soldiery have suffered."[3] "And, because our German people are a wild and unruly race, half diabolical and half human, some even desire the advent and rule of the Turk."[4]

So scathing a description of the German people leads us to enquire into his attitude to German nationalism.

### 5. Luther's Nationalism and Patriotism

In spite of his outspoken criticism of their faults, Luther recognised and honoured the good qualities of the Germans. His denunciations at times were certainly rather severe: "We Germans," he says, "remain Germans, i.e. pigs and brutes";[5] and again, "We vile Germans are horrid swine"; "for the most part such shocking pigs are we hopeless Germans that neither modesty, discipline nor reason is to be found in us";[6] we are a "nation of barbarians," etc. Germans, according to him, abuse the gifts of God "worse than would hogs."[7] He is fond of using such language when censuring the corruption of morals which had arisen owing to abuse and disregard of the Evangel which he preached. Even where he attempts to explain his manner of proceeding, where, for instance, he tries to justify the delay in forming

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 391.

[2] This is the only possible explanation of the following prayer contained in the solemn service for the Ordination of Ministers which he had drafted: "That Thou wouldst at length restrain and put an end to the wicked atrocities of the Pope and Mahometh and other factious spirits, who blaspheme Thy Name, destroy Thy Kingdom and resist Thy Will" (*ibid.*, 64, p. 292).

[3] *Ibid.*, 62, p. 389.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 107; Erl. ed., 31, p. 33.

[5] *Ibid.*, 19, p. 631, in the writing "Ob Kriegsleutte auch ynn seligen Stande seyn künden," 1526.

[6] *Ibid.*, 23, p. 149; Erl. ed., 30, p. 68.

[7] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 406 f. "Tischreden."

the "Assembly of true Christians," he knows how to display to the worst advantage the unpleasing side of the German character. "We Germans are a wild, savage, blustering people with whom it is not easy to do anything except in case of dire necessity."[1]

By the side of such spiteful explosions must be set the many kindlier and not unmerited testimonies Luther gives to the good qualities peculiar to the nation.[2] In various passages, more particularly in his "Table-Talk," he credits the Germans with perseverance and steadfastness in their undertakings, also with industry, contentment and disinterestedness; they had not indeed the grace of the Italians, nor the eloquence of the French, but they were more honest and straightforward, and had more homely affection for their good old customs. He also believes that they had formerly been distinguished for great fidelity, "particularly in marriage," though unfortunately this was no longer the case.[3]

Much more instructive than any such expressions of opinion, favourable or unfavourable, is the attitude Luther adopted towards the political questions which concerned the existence, the unity and the greatness of his country.

Here his religious standpoint induced him to take steps which a true German could only regret. We have already shown how the defence against the Turks was hampered by his action. He also appreciably degraded the Empire in the eyes of the Christian nations.[4] He not merely attacked

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 75; Erl. ed., 22, p. 231. "Deudsche Messe und Ordnung Gottisdiensts," 1526. In connection with Luther's favourite expression "We Germans," we may here remark that Luther's opponents at Leipzig spread the report that he was really of Bohemian origin. This they did when, in his Sermon on the Body of Christ, preached in 1519, he had demanded the general use of the chalice at communion, as did the Utraquists of Bohemia. As to this statement that "I was born in Bohemia, educated at Prague and instructed in Wiclif's writings," Luther replied in his writing: "Erklerung etlicher Artickel yn seynem Sermon von dem heyligen Sacrament," 1520, that this was a "piece of folly." "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 81 f.

[2] Cp. "Tischreden." c. 76: "Von Landen und Städten," "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 405 ff. Before this we read, *ibid.*, p. 390: "Germany has always been the best land and nation; but what befell Troy will also befall her," etc.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 406.

[4] Cp. above p. 55, p. 71 f. and p. 77, the passages against the Emperor, who "boasts so shamelessly of being the true, chief protector of the

the authority of the Emperor and thereby the power which held together the Empire, by his criticism of the edicts of the Diets, by the spirit of discord and party feeling he aroused amongst those who shared his opinions, and by his unmeasured and incessant abuse of the authorities, but, as years went by, he also came even to approve, as we have seen above (p. 53 ff.), of armed resistance to the Emperor and the Empire as something lawful, nay, praiseworthy, if undertaken on behalf of the new Evangel.

"If it is lawful to defend ourselves against the Turk," he writes, "then it is still more lawful to do so against the Pope, who is even worse. Since the Emperor has associated himself with the defenders of the Pope, he must expect to be treated as his wickedness deserves." "Formerly I advised that we should yield to the Emperor [i.e. not undertake anything against him]; even now I still say that we should yield to these heathen tyrants when they—Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, Emperor, etc.—cease to appeal to the name of Christ, but acknowledge themselves to be what they really are, viz. slaves of Satan; but if, in the name of Christ, they wish to stone Christians, then their stones will recoil on their own heads and they will incur the penalty attached to the Second Commandment."[1]

He saw "no difference between an assassin and the Emperor," should the latter proceed against his party—a course which, as a matter of fact, was imposed on the Emperor by the very laws of the Empire. How, he asks, "can a man sacrifice his body and this poor life in a higher and more praiseworthy cause" "than in such worship [resistance by violence] for the saving of God's honour and the protection of poor Christendom, as David, Ezechias and other holy kings and princes did?"[2]

Countless examples from the Old Testament such as the above were always at his command for the purpose of illustrating his arguments.

In the "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," in 1531,

Christian faith," though he is but "a poor bag of worms," and against his blind and hidden falsehoods. Other abuse of the Emperor, interspersed with praise, will be quoted below (p. 104 f.).

[1] To Johann Ludicke, Pastor at Cottbus, on February 8, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 87. Cp. above, p. 72 f.

[2] To the Elector Johann Frederick in January, 1539, "Briefwechsel," 12, p. 78. Cp. above, p. 70 f.

he warns the Imperial power that God, "even though He Himself sit still, may well raise up a Judas Machabeus" should the Imperial forces have recourse to arms against the "Evangelicals"; their enemies would learn what their ancestors had learned in the war with Ziska and the Husites. Resistance to "blood-hounds" is, after all, mere self-defence. Whoever followed the Emperor against him and his party became guilty of all the Emperor's own "godless abominations." To instruct "his German people" on this matter was the object of the writing above referred to.[1]

"As I am the Prophet of the Germans—this high-sounding title I am obliged to assume to please my asinine Papists—I will act as a faithful teacher and warn my staunch Germans of the danger in which they stand."[2]

By thus coming forward as the divinely commissioned spokesman of the Germans, as the representative and prophet of the nation, he implicitly denied to those who did not follow his banner the right of being styled Germans. He was fond of professing, in his war on Pope and Church, to be the champion of the Germans against Rome's oppression. This enabled him to stir up the national feeling amongst those who followed him as his allies, and to win over the vacillating by means of the delusive watchword: "Germany against Italian tyranny." But, apart from the absolute want of justification for any such appeal to national prejudices, the assumption that Germany was wholly on his side was entirely wrong. He spoke merely in the name of a fraction of the German nation. To those who remained faithful to the Church and who, often at great costs to themselves, defended the heritage of their pious German forefathers, it was a grievous insult that German nationalism should thus be identified with the new faith and Church.

Even at the present time in the German-speaking world Catholics stand to Protestants in the relation of two-fifths to three-fifths, and, if it would be a mistake to-day to regard Teutonism and Protestantism as synonymous—a mistake only to be met with where deepest prejudice prevails—still better founded were the complaints of Catholics in Luther's own time, that he should identify the new Saxon doctrines

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 281 f., 300 f.; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 10 f., 30.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 290=22.

with the German name and the interests of Germany as a whole.[1]

Even in the first years of his public career he appealed to his readers' patriotism as against Rome. In 1518, before he had even thought of his aggressive pamphlet "To the German Nobility," he commended the German Princes for coming forward to protect the German people against the extortions of the Roman Curia; "Prierias, Cajetan and Co. call us blockheads, simpletons, beasts and barbarians, and scoff at the patience with which we allow ourselves to be deceived."[2] In the following year, when this charge had already become one of his stock complaints, he summed it up thus: "We Germans, through our emperors, bestowed power and prestige on the Popes in olden days and, now, in return, we are forced to submit to being fleeced and plundered.[3] In the writing against Alveld, "Von dem Bapstum tzu Rome," a year later, he declared in words calculated to excite the ire of every Teuton, that in Rome they were determined to suck the last farthing out of the "tipsy Germans," as they termed them; unless Princes and nobles defended themselves to the utmost the Italians would make of Germany a wilderness. "At Rome they even have a saying about us, viz. 'We must milk the German fools of their cash the best way we can.'"[4]

That Luther should have conducted his attacks on the Papacy on these lines was due in part to Ulrich von Hutten's influence. Theodore Kolde has rightly pointed out, that his acquaintance with Hutten's writings largely accounts for the utter virulence of Luther's assault on "Romanism."[5] There is no doubt that the sparks of hate which emanated from this frivolous and revolutionary humanist contributed to kindle the somewhat peculiar patriotism of the Witten-

[1] Doctor Johann Mensing, O.P., a literary opponent of Luther's, in dedicating a polemical tract of 1526, defends the Catholics' sense of patriotism, speaking of Luther as the "destroyer of our fair German land" (see "Luthers Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 478). Another Dominican, Thomas Rhadinus Todischus, in 1520, in the title of a work published at Rome, describes him as "violating the glory of the nation" ("*nationis gloriam violans*"). The latter work was attributed by Luther and Melanchthon to Emser, who, however, repudiated the authorship. Cp. *ibid.*, 7, p. 259.

[2] See vol. i., p. 403.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 289; Erl. ed., 27, p. 91. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 9 f.

[5] "Luthers Stellung zu Concil und Kirche," 1876, p. 69.

berg professor. All the good that Rome had brought to Germany in the shape of Christian culture was lost to sight in the whirlwind of revolt heralded by Hutten ; the financial oppression exercised by the Curia, and the opposition between German and Italian, were grossly exaggerated by the knights.

Specifically German elements played, however, their part in Luther's movement. The famous *Gravamina Nationis Germanicæ* had been formulated before Luther began to exploit them. Another German element was the peculiar mysticism, viz. that of Tauler and the "Theologia Deutsch," on which, though he misapprehended much of it, Luther at the outset based his theories. German frankness and love of freedom also appeared to find their utterance in the plain and vigorous denunciations which the Monk of Wittenberg addressed to high and low alike ; even his uncouth boldness found a strong echo in the national character. And yet it was not so much "national fellow-feeling,"[1] to quote the expression of a Protestant author, which insured him such success, but other far more deeply seated causes, some of which will be touched upon later, while others have already been discussed.

It is, however, noteworthy that this "Prophet of the Germans," when speaking to the nation he was so fond of calling his own, did not scruple to predict for it the gloomiest future.

A dark pessimism broods over Luther's spirit almost constantly whenever he speaks of the years awaiting Germany ; he sees the people, owing to his innovations, confronted with disastrous civil wars, split up into endless and perpetually increasing sects and thus brought face to face with hopeless moral degradation. His cry is. Let the Empire dissolve, "Let Germany perish." "Let the world fall into ruins."[2] He consoles himself with the reflection that Christ, when founding His Church, had foreseen and sanctioned the inevitable destruction of all hostile powers, of Judaism and even of the Roman Empire. It was in the

[1] H. Meltzer, "Luther als deutscher Mann," Tübingen, 1905, p. 56.

[2] Cp. above, p. 45 f. "Let things take their course and do their worst, whether it be war or rebellion, as God's anger may decree." "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 279 ; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 8, "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," 1531.

nature of the Gospel to triumph by the destruction of all that withstood it. It was certainly a misfortune, Luther admits, that the wickedness of the Germans, every day growing worse, should be the cause of this ruin. "I am very hopeless about Germany now that she has harboured within her walls those real Turks and devils, viz. avarice, usury, tyranny, dissensions and this Lernean serpent of envy and malice which has entangled the nobles, the Court, every Rathaus, town and village, to say nothing of the contempt for the Divine Word and unprecedented ingratitude [towards the new Evangel]." This is how he wrote to Lauterbach.[1] Writing to Jonas, he declared: "No improvement need be looked for in Germany whether the realm be in the hands of the Turk or in our own, for the only aim of the nobility and Princes is how they can enslave Germany and suck the people dry and make everything their very own."[2]

The lack of any real national feeling among the Princes was another element which caused him anxiety. Yet he himself had done as much as any to further the spread of that "particularism" which to a great extent had replaced the national German ideal; he had unduly exalted the rights of the petty sovereigns by giving them the spiritual privileges and property of the Church, and he had confirmed them in their efforts to render themselves entirely independent of the Emperor and to establish themselves as despots within their own territories. Since the unhappy war of 1525 the peasantry and lower classes were convinced that no remedy was to be found in religion for the amelioration of their social condition, and had come to hate both Luther and the lords, because they believed both to have been instrumental in increasing their burdens. The other classes, instead of thanking him for furthering the German cause, also complained of having had to suffer on his account. In this connection we may mention the

[1] On November 10, 1541, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 407: "*Ego pœne de Germania desperavi*," etc. Of this passage we read in Köstlin-Kawerau (2, p. 572): "The exaltation which had been experienced by every grade of the nation during the first period of the Reformation had, as a matter of fact, largely died out, and now the lowest motives held sway."

[2] On March 7, 1543, *ibid.*, p. 548: "*Neque bene habebit Germania, sive regnet Turca sive nostrates*," etc.

grievance of the mercantile community, Luther having deemed it necessary to denounce as morally dangerous any oversea trade.[1] It was also a grievous blow to education and learning in Germany, when, owing to the storm which Luther let loose, the Universities were condemned to a long period of enforced inactivity.[2] He himself professed that his particular mission was to awaken interest in the Bible, not to promote learning ; yet Germans owe him small thanks for opposing as he did the discoveries of the famous German Canon of Frauenburg, Niklas Koppernigk (Copernicus), and for describing the founder of modern astronomy as a fool who wished to upset all the previous science of the heavens.[3]

Whilst showing himself ultra-conservative where good and useful progress in secular matters was concerned, he, on the other hand, scrupled not to sacrifice the real and vital interests of his nation in the question of public ecclesiastical conditions by his want of conservatism and his revolutionary innovations. True conservatism would have endeavoured to protect the German commonwealth and to preserve it from disaster by a strict guard over the good and tried elements on which it rested, more particularly over unchangeable dogma. The wilful destruction of the heritage, social, religious and learned, contributed to by countless generations of devout forebears ever since the time of St. Boniface, at the expense of untold toil and self-sacrifice, can certainly not be described as patriotic on the part of a German. At any rate, it can never have occurred to anyone seriously to expect that those Germans whose views on religion were not those of Luther should have taken his view of the duty of a patriot.

The main fact remains that Luther's action drove a wedge into the unity of the German nation. Wherever his spirit prevailed—which was by no means the case in every place which to some extent came under his influence—there also prevailed prejudice, suspicion and mistrust against all non-Lutherans, rendering difficult any co-operation for the welfare of the fatherland.

In discussing a recent work which extols Luther as a " true German " a learned Protestant gives it as his opinion, that, however much one may be inclined to exalt his patriot-

[1] See vol. v., xxxv., 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, xxxv., 3.
[3] *Ibid.*

ism, it must, nevertheless, be allowed that Luther cherished a sort of indifference to the vital interests of his nation; his "religious concentration" made him less mindful of true patriotism; this our author excuses by the remark: "Justice and truth were more to him than home and people." Luther, it is also said, "did not clearly point out the independent, ethical value of a national feeling, just as he omitted to insist at all clearly on the reaction of the ethical upon the religious."[1]

On the other hand, however, his ways and feelings are often represented as the "very type and model of the true German."[2] Nor is this view to be found among Protestants only, for Ignatius von Döllinger adopted it in later life, when he saw fit to abandon his previous position.

Before this, in 1851, in his Sketch of Luther, he had indeed said, concerning his patriotism, that, in his handling of the language and the use he made of the peculiarities of his countrymen, "he possessed a wonderful gift of charming his hearers, and that his power as a popular orator was based on an accurate knowledge and appreciation of the foibles of the German national character."[3] In 1861, he wrote in another work: "Luther is the most powerful demagogue and the most popular character that Germany has ever possessed." "From the mind of this man, the greatest German of his day, sprang the Protestant faith. Before the ascendency and creative energy of this mind, the more aspiring and vigorous portion of the nation humbly and trustfully bent the knee. In him, who so well united in himself intellect and force, they recognised their master; in his ideas they lived; to them he seemed the hero in whom the nation with all its peculiarities was embodied. They admired him, they surrendered themselves to him because they believed they had found in him their ideal, and because they found in his writings their own most intimate feelings, only expressed more clearly, more eloquently and more powerfully than they themselves were capable of doing. Thus Luther's name is to Germany not merely that of a distinguished man, but the very embodiment of a pregnant period in national life, the centre of a new circle of ideas and the most concise expression of those religious and ethical views amidst which the German spirit moved, and the powerful influence of which not even those who were averse to them could altogether escape."[4]

Here special stress is laid on Luther's power over "the more

[1] "Deutsche Literaturztg.," 1905, No. 10, Scheel's Review of H. Meltzer's "Luther als deutscher Mann" (see above, p. 98, n. 1).

[2] Meltzer, *ibid.*, 56.

[3] "Luther, eine Skizze," p. 57.

[4] "Kirche und Kirchen, Papsttum und Kirchenstaat," p. 10, 386 f.

aspiring Germans" who followed him, i.e. over the Protestant portion of the nation. Elsewhere, however, in 1872, Döllinger brings under Luther's irresistible spell "his time and his people," i.e. the whole of Germany, quite regardless of the fact that the larger portion still remained Catholic. "Luther's overpowering mind and extraordinary versatility made him the man of his time and of his people; there never was a German who understood his people so well, or who in turn was so thoroughly understood, yea, drunk in, by the people, as this Monk of Wittenberg. The mind and spirit of the German people were in his hands like a harp in the hands of the musician. For had he not bestowed upon them more than ever one man had given to his people since the dawn of Christianity? A new language, popular handbooks, a German Bible, and his hymns. He alone impressed upon the German language and the German spirit alike his own imperishable seal, so that even those amongst us who abhor him from the bottom of our hearts as the mighty heresiarch who seduced the German nation cannot help speaking with his words and thinking with his thoughts. Yet, even more powerful than this Titan of the intellectual sphere, was the longing of the German nation for freedom from the bonds of a corrupt ecclesiasticism."[1]

The change in Döllinger's conception of Luther which is here apparent was not simply due to his personal antagonism to the Vatican Council; it is closely connected with his then efforts, proclaimed even in the very title of the Lectures in question: "Reunion of the Christian Churches"; for this reunion Döllinger hoped to be able to pave the way without the assistance of, and even in opposition to, the Roman Catholic Church. The fact is, however, that in the above passages the domination which Luther exercised over those who had fallen away with him has been made far too much of, otherwise how can we explain Luther's own incessant complaints regarding the small response to the preaching of his new Evangel? The production of a schism by his vehement and forceful oratory was one thing; vigorous direction and leadership in the task of religious reconstruction was quite a different matter.

It is not our intention here to embark upon a controversy

[1] "Vorträge über die Wiedervereinigung der chr. Kirchen," authentic edition, 1888, p. 53 f. Cp. E. Michael, "Döllinger,[3]" p. 230 ff. Michael rightly quotes the following striking passage of the earlier Döllinger as descriptive of the attitude of the Church towards Luther: "May not the time come, nay, be already at hand, when [Protestant] preachers and theologians will take a calmer view of things and realise that the Catholic Church in Germany only did what she could not avoid doing? All the reproaches and charges made against this Church amount in fine to this, that she rejected the demand made of her in the name of the Reformation to break with her past, that she remained faithful to her traditions, that she persisted in developing along the lines originally laid down, and resolved to fulfil her task while holding fast to the uninterrupted continuity of her ecclesiastical life and her connection with the other portions of the Church" ("Kirche und Kirchen," p. 490).

on such an opinion concerning Luther's German influence as that here advanced by Döllinger. The present work will, in due course, treat of Luther's posthumous influence on German culture and the German language, of his famous German Bible, and of his hymnological work (see vol. v., xxxiv., xxxv.), when we shall have occasion to show the true value to be accorded to such statements. As they stand, our last quotations from Döllinger merely constitute a part of the legend which grew up long since around the memory of the Wittenberg professor.

It must certainly be admitted, that Luther's powerful language is grounded on a lively and clear comprehension of German ways of thought and German modes of expression; his command of language and his power for trenchant description, which were the result of his character, of his intercourse with the common people and his talent for noting their familiar ways of speech, were rare qualities. He left in his writings much that served as a model to later Germans. Of his translation of the Bible in particular we may say, with Janssen, that, although Luther cannot be termed the actual founder of the new High-German, yet "his deserts as regards the development of the German language are great," especially in the matter of "syntax and style. In the last respect no one of any insight will wish to dispute the service which Luther rendered." "The force and expression of the popular speech was hit off by Luther in a masterly manner in his Bible translations."[1]

Those Germans, who had been won over to the new faith and had become Luther's faithful followers, found in the instructions written in his own popular vein, particularly in those on the Bible, enlightenment and edification, in many cases, no doubt, much to their advantage. Writing for the benefit of this circle, the versatile author, in his ethical works—his controversial ones are not here under consideration—deals with countless other subjects outside the range of biblical teaching; here his manner owes its power to the fact that he speaks in tones caught from the lips of the people themselves. Thus, for instance, when he discovers the blots which sully the nation: luxury in dress, the avarice of the rich, the "miserliness and hoarding" of the peasants. Or when he tells unpleasant truths to the "great

[1] Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. Trans.), 14, p. 408 f.

fops," the nobles, concerning their despotic and arrogant behaviour. Or, again, when he raises his voice in condemnation of the neglect of education, or to reprove excessive drinking, or when, to mention a special case, he paints in lurid and amusing colours the slothfulness and utter carelessness of the Germans after having achieved any success in war against the Turks. His gift of humour always stood him in good stead, and his love of extravagant phraseology and imagery and of incisive rhetoric was of the greatest service to him in his dealings with the people, for both appealed strongly to German taste. Nor must we forget his proficiency in the effective application of German proverbs—a collection of proverbs in his own handwriting is still extant and has recently been published—nor his familiarity with German folk-lore and ballads, nor finally the wonderful gift which served to tranquillise many who were still undecided and wavering, viz. the boundless assurance and unshakable confidence with which he could advance even the most novel and startling opinions. The Germans of that day loved weight and power, and a strong man could not fail to impress them, hence, for those who were not restrained by obedience to the Church, Luther undoubtedly seemed a real chip of the old German block.

A single passage, one against usurers, will serve to show with what energy this man of the people could raise his voice, to the joy of the many who groaned under the burden. "Ah, how securely the usurer lives and rages as though he himself were God and Lord of the whole land; no one dares to resist him. And now that I write against them these saintly usurers scoff at me and say: 'Luther doesn't know what usury is; let him read his Matthew and his Psalter.' But I preach Christ and my word is the Word of God, and of this I am well assured, that you accursed usurers shall be taught either by the Turk or by some other tool of God's wrath, that Luther really knew and understood what usury was. At any rate, my warning is worth a sterling gulden."[1]

On the very same page he vents his anger against the supreme Imperial Court of Justice, because, "in matters pertaining to the Gospel and the Church," its sentences did not accord with his. "I shan't be a hypocrite, but shall speak the truth and say: See what a devil's strumpet reigns in the Imperial Kammergericht, which ought to be a heavenly jewel in the German land, the one consolation of all who suffer injustice."

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 77, in "Vermanunge zum Gebet wider den Türcken."

Particularly effective was his incitement of the people to hate Popery. "We Germans must remain Germans and the Pope's own donkeys and victims, even though we are brayed in the mortar like sodden barley, as Solomon says (Prov. xxvii. 22); we stick fast in our folly. No complaints, no instruction, no beseeching, no imploring, not even our own daily experience of how we have been fleeced and devoured opens our eyes."[1]— "The Emperor and the Princes," he had already said, "openly go about telling lies of us";[2] "pigs and donkeys," "mad and tipsy Princes," such are the usual epithets with which he spices his language here and later.

"Out of deep sympathy for us poor Germans"[3] it is that he ventures to speak thus in the name of all.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 254; Erl. ed., $24^2$, p. 222. "Zwey keyserliche . . . Gepott," 1524.

[2] In the same way that he here abuses the Emperor, so he also knows how to bestow praise upon him; for instance, in the official writing referred to above (p. 89) to the Electoral Prince Joachim of Brandenburg and in his "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," where he declares, strangely enough, that "our beloved Emperor Carol" has shown himself hitherto, and last of all at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, such, that he has won the respect and love of the whole world and deserves that no trouble should befall him, and that our people should only speak in praise of his Imperial virtue" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 291; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 23), and yet, even there, in consequence of his edict against the new faith at the Diet of Augsburg, he puts the Emperor with the Pope, as the originators of a resolution which "must prove an eternal blot upon all the Princes and the whole Empire, and make us Germans blush for shame before God and the whole world," so that "even the Turk, the 'Tattars' and 'Moscobites' despise us." "Who under the whole expanse of heaven will for the future fear us or think well of us when they hear that we allow ourselves to be hoaxed, mocked, treated as children, as fools, nay, even as clods and blocks by the cursed Pope and his tools [who hold the Emperor in leading strings]? . . . Every German may well regret that he was born a German and is called a German" (*ibid.*, p. 285=15). On the strength of the words quoted above in praise of the Emperor we find Luther credited in Protestant works of history with "the old, loyal sentiments of a good, simple German for his Emperor," nay, even with "the language of charity which according to Holy Scripture believes all things, hopes all things." And yet Luther in his letters to his confidential friends spoke after this of Charles V. in the following terms: "The Emperor was, is, and shall ever remain a servant of the servants of the devil," and the worst of it is, that he "lends the devil his services knowingly" (to Jonas, etc., March or April, 1540, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 275). "God's wrath has come upon him and his friends. . . . We have prayed enough for him, if he does not want a blessing, then let him take our curse." He accuses him of hypocrisy ("*purus hypocrita*") and of breach of faith with the Turks after his stay at Vienna; he had swallowed up the Bishopric of Liège and intended to do the same with all the bishopries along the Rhine (to Melanchthon, June 17, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 370). "I suspect the Emperor is a miscreant ('*quod sit nequam*') and his brother Ferdinand is an abominable bounder" (to Amsdorf, October 21, 1545, "Briefe," 5, p. 764).

[3] Commencement of the work: "Zwey keyserliche Gepott," 1524, "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 254; Erl. ed., $24^2$, p. 221.

He boldly holds up his Evangel as the German preaching *par excellence*. He declares: "I seek the welfare and salvation of you Germans."[1]—"We Germans have heard the true Word of God for many years, by which means God, the Father of all Mercy, has enlightened us and called us from the horrible abominations of the Papal darkness and idolatry into His holy light and Kingdom. But with what gratitude and honesty we have accepted and practised it, it is terrible to contemplate."

Formerly, he says, we filled every corner with idolatries such as Masses, Veneration of the Saints, and good works, but now we persecute the dear Word, so that it would not be surprising should God flood Germany, not only with Turks, but with real devils; indeed, it is a wonder He has not done so already.[2]

However small the hope was of any improvement resulting from his preaching, he fomented the incipient schism by such words as these: "They [the Romans] have always abused our simplicity by their wantonness and tyranny; they call us mad Germans, who allow themselves to be hoaxed and made fools of. . . . We are supposed to have an Empire, but it is the Pope who has our possessions, honour, body, soul and everything else. . . . Thus the Pope feeds on the kernel and we nibble at the empty shells."[3]

Finally, there are some who select certain traits of Luther's character in order to represent him as the type of a true German. Such specifically German characteristics were certainly not lacking in Luther; it would be strange, indeed, were this not the case in a man of German stock, hailing from the lower class and who was always in close touch with his compatriots. Luther was inured to fatigue, simple in his appearance and habits, persevering and enduring; in intercourse with his friends he was frank, hearty and unaffected; with them he was sympathetic, amiable and fond of a joke; he did not, however, shrink from telling them the truth even when thereby offence might be given; towards the Princes who were well-disposed to him and his party he behaved with an easy freedom of manner, not cringingly or with any exaggerated deference. In a sense all these are German traits.[4] But many of these qualities,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 291; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 22 in the "Warnunge" referred to above.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 75. "Vermanunge zum Gebet wider den Türcken.'

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6. p. 463 f; Erl. ed., 21, p. 352 f. "An den christl. Adel."

[4] It will not be possible to enter one by one into the somewhat remarkable reasons assigned in the popular Protestant biographies of Luther as to why Luther should be regarded as the type of the German

albeit good in themselves, owing to his public controversy, assumed a very unpleasant character. His perseverance degenerated into obstinacy and defiance, his laborious endurance into a passionate activity which overtaxed his powers, and he became combative and quarrelsome and found his greatest pleasure in the discomfiture of his opponents; his frankness made way for the coarsest criticism. The anger against the Church which carried him along found expression in the worst sorts of insults, and, when his violence had aroused bitter feelings, he believed, or at least alleged, he was merely acting in the interests of uprightness and love of truth. Had he preserved his heritage of good German qualities, perfected them and devoted them to the service of a better cause, he might have become the acknowledged spokesman of all Germans everywhere. He could have branded vice and instilled into the hearts of his countrymen the love of virtue more strongly and effectively than even Geiler of Kaysersberg; in seasoned and effective satire on matters of morals he would

character. We there read, that the stamp of the German character is to be found in the fact that he "always acted upon impulse"—which seems to be based on the correct view of Luther as a child of impulse, who allowed himself to be carried away by his feelings. The following reason is less clear, viz. that he was "A German through and through because he sought for the roots of all life, of the family, the race, the State and civilisation, in personality as directly determined by feeling." Reference is frequently made to Luther's frank and upright character and to his undaunted love of truth. The facts bearing upon this point, already adduced, or to be dealt with in chapter xxii. of the present work (vol. iv.), dispense us from treating of this matter here. To base Luther's claim to being a typical German on his manner of speech is to run the risk of bringing Germans into disrepute, if we recall the rude invective in which he often indulges and which he employs when, as he says, he is speaking plain German to his opponents. "This is the German way of speaking," he constantly repeats after explosions of anger and vulgar abuse. This, for instance, is the way in which he gives the "Romans a German answer." On one occasion he describes in a repulsive manner how the "strumpet church of the Pope" behaves: "She plays the whore with everyone," is an "apostate, runaway, wedded whore, a house-whore, a bed-whore"; compared with her "light women are holy, for she is the devil's own whore," who makes of many of the faithful virgins of Christ, born in baptism, arch-whores. This is what I call plain German speaking, and you and everyone can understand what I mean." On the same page he continues: "It has happened to them [the Papists] according to the proverb: the dog has returned to his vomit and the sow that was washed to wallow in the mire. That is what you are, and what I once was. There you have your new, apostate, runaway churches described for you in plain German." "Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 46. "Wider Hans Worst," 1541.

have far excelled Sebastian Brant and Thomas Murner; in depth of feeling and sympathetic expression he could have rivalled Bertold of Ratisbon, and his homely ways would have qualified him to enforce the Christian precepts amongst all the grades and conditions of German life even more effectively than any previous preacher.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE DIVINE MISSION AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

#### 1. Growth of Luther's Idea of his Divine Mission

WHEREAS the most zealous of Luther's earliest pupils and followers outvied one another in depicting their master as the messenger of God, who had come before the world equipped with revelations from on high, the tendency of later Protestantism has been, more and more, to reduce Luther, so to speak, to a merely natural level, and to represent him as a hero indeed, but as one inspired by merely human motives. An earlier generation exalted him to mystical regions, and, being nearer him in point of time and therefore knowing him better, grasped the fact that he was dominated by a certain supernaturalism. Many later and more recent writers, on the other hand, have preferred to square their conception of his personality with their own liberal views on religion. They hail Luther as the champion of free thought and therefore as the founder of modern intellectual life. What he discovered in his struggles with himself by reflection and pious meditation, that, they say, he bequeathed to posterity without insisting upon the immutability of his ideas or claiming for them any infallibility. His only permanent work, his real legacy to posterity, was a negative one, viz. the breach with Popery, which he consummated, thanks to his extraordinary powers.

This is, however, from the religious standpoint, to attenuate Luther's figure as it appears in history, notwithstanding the tribute paid to his talents.

If he is not the "messenger of God," whose doctrines, inspired from on high, the world was bound to accept, then he ceases to be Luther, for it was from his supernatural estimate of himself that he drew all his strength and defiance.

Force him to quit the dim, mystical heights from which he fancies he exercises his sway, and his claim on the faith of mankind becomes inexplicable and he himself an enigma.

It has been pointed out above, how Luther gradually reached the conviction that he had received his doctrine by a special revelation, with the Divine mission to communicate it to the world and to reform the Church (vol. ii., p. 92 f.). The conviction, that, as he declares, "the Holy Ghost had revealed the Scriptures" to him culminated in that personal assurance of salvation which was suddenly vouchsafed to him in the Tower.[1]

It will repay us to examine more closely the nature of this idea, and its manifestations, now that we have the mature man before us.

The founder of the new Church has reached a period when he no longer scruples to speak of the "revelations" which had been made to him, and which he is compelled to proclaim. "By His Grace," he says, "God has revealed this doctrine to me."[2]—"I have it by revelation . . . that will I not deny."[3] Of his mission he assures us: "By God's revelation I am called to be a sort of antipope";[4] of his chief dogma, he will have it that "the Holy Ghost bestowed it upon me,"[5] and declares that "under pain of the curse of eternal reprobation" he had been "instructed ('*interminatum*') not to doubt of it in any way."[6] Of this he solemnly assured the Elector Frederick in a letter written in 1522: "Concerning my cause I would say: Your Electoral Highness is aware, or, if not aware, is hereby apprised of the fact, that I received the Evangel, not from man, but from heaven

[1] Cp. vol. i., p. 396 f., his statements concerning the incident in the Tower. See also vol. i., p. 166 ff., and p. 280 ff.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 20, p. 674. "*Hanc doctrinam mihi* (*Deus*) *revelavit per gratiam suam.*" In 1527.

[3] Cochlæus in his account (June 12, 1521) of his conversation with Luther at Worms: "*Est mihi revelatum,*" etc. In Enders' reprint, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 3, p. 176; in the new edition by Greving "Flugschriften aus der Reformationszeit," 4, 3, 1910), p. 19.

[4] "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 23 (a. 1523).

[5] "Lauterbachs Tagebuch," p. 81, n.

[6] Khummer in "Lauterbachs Tagebuch," p. 62, n.: "*Doctor Martinus Lutherus indignus sum, sed dignus fui creari . . . redimi . . . doceri a filio Dei et Spiritu sancto, fui* (*dignus*) *cui ministerium verbi crederetur, fui qui pro eo tanta paterer, fui qui in tot malis servarer, fui cui præciperetur ista credere, fui cui sub æternæ iræ maledictione interminaretur, ne ullo modo de iis dubitarem.*" Cp. "Briefe," 5, p. 324, and 6, p. 520, n. 6.

alone through our Lord Jesus Christ, so that I might well subscribe myself and boast of being a minister and evangelist —as, indeed, I shall do for the future."[1]

It is because he has received the Word of God direct from on high that he is so firm. "God's Word," he cries, "is above everything to me; I have the Divine Majesty on my side, therefore I care not in the least though a thousand Augustines, or a thousand Harry-Churches [Henry VIII. of England was then still a Catholic] should be against me; I am quite certain that the true Church holds fast with me to God's Word, and leaves it to the Harry-Churches to depend on the words of men."[2]

There are many passages in which he merely claims to have been enlightened in his ruminations and labours and thus led to embrace the real, saving truth; less frequently do we hear of any actual, sudden inspiration from above. Where he does claim this most distinctly is in the matter of the discovery of his chief doctrine, viz. assurance of salvation by justifying faith, vouchsafed to him in the Tower of the Wittenberg monastery. The fact that his mode of expression varies may be explained not merely by his own involuntary wavering, but by the very difficulty of imparting his favourite doctrine to others. His frame of mind, outward circumstances and the character of his hearers or readers were the cause of his choice of words. With his friends, for instance, more particularly the younger ones, and likewise in his sermons at Wittenberg, he was fond of laying stress on what he had once said to the lawyers when they molested him with Canon Law: "They shall respect our teaching, which is the Word of God spoken by the Holy Ghost through our lips,"[3] When speaking to larger audiences, on the other hand, he does not as a rule claim more than a gradual, inner enlightenment by God, which indeed partakes of the nature of a revelation, but to which he was led by his work and study and inward experience. In the presence of the fanatics he became, after 1524, more cautious in his claims, owing to the similar ones made on their own behalf by these sectarians.

[1] On March 5, 1522, at Borna, on the journey from the Wartburg to Wittenberg. "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 106 (Briefwechsel," 3, p. 296).

[2] "Werke," Weim, ed., 10, 2, p. 256; Erl. ed., 28, p. 379, in the work: "Antwort auff König Henrichs Buch," 1522.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 276. "Table-Talk."

Yet the idea of an assurance born of God lies at the bottom of all his statements.

He worked himself into this belief until it became part of his nature.[1] He had to face many doubts and scruples, but he overcame them, and, in the latter years of his life, we hear little of any such. His struggle with these doubts, which clearly betray the faulty basis of his conviction, will be dealt with elsewhere.[2]

"I am certain and am determined to feel so." Expressions such as this are not seldom to be met with in Luther's letters and writings.[3]

An almost appalling strength of will lurks behind such assurances. Indeed, what impels him seems to savour more of self-suggestion than of inward experience. To the objections brought forward by his adversaries he frequently enough merely opposes his "certainty"; behind this he endeavours to conceal the defects of his proofs from Scripture, and his inability to reply to the reasons urged against him. His determination to find conviction constitutes one of Luther's salient psychological characteristics; of the Titanic strength at his disposal he made proof first and foremost in his own case.

Luther also succeeded in inducing in himself a pseudo-mystic mood in which he fancied himself acting in everything conformably with a Divine mission, everywhere specially guided and protected as beseemed a messenger of God.

For instance, he says that he wrote the pamphlet against the seditious peasants in obedience to a Divine command; "therefore my little book is right and will always be so, though all the world should be incensed at it."[4]

"It is the Lord Who has done this," he had declared of the Peasant Rising when he recognised in it elements favourable to his cause; "It is the Lord Who has done this and Who conceals these menaces and dangers from the eyes of the Princes, and will even bring it about Himself by means of their blindness and violence." That the Princes are

[1] See vol. vi., xxxvi. 4. [2] See vol. v., xxxii.

[3] See, for instance, "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 641: "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 162 *seq.* "*De servo arbitrio*," 1525.

[4] Cp. Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. Trans.), 4, p. 314. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 208.

threatened with destruction, that "I firmly believe the Spirit proclaims through me."[1]

Later on he was no less sure that he could foresee in the Spirit the coming outbreak of a religious war in Germany; only the prayers which he—who had the Divine interests so much at heart—offered, could avail to stave off the war; at least the delay was mainly the result of this prayer: "I am assured that God really hearkens to my prayer, and I know that so long as I live there will be no war in Germany."

Never does he tire of declaring that the misfortunes and deaths which his foes have to deplore are the result of the intervention of heaven on behalf of his cause.[2] He was convinced that he had repeatedly been cured in sickness and saved from death by Christ, by Him, as he says in 1534, "in Whose faith I commenced all this and carried it through, to the admiration even of my opponents."[3] He, "one of the Apostles and Evangelists of Germany, is," so he proclaims in 1526 in a pamphlet, "a man delivered over to death and only preserved in life by a wonder and in defiance of the wrath of the devil and his saints."[4]

In February, 1520, he speaks of the intimation he has received of a great storm impending, were God not to place some hindrance in the way of Satan. "I have seen Satan's cunning plans for my destruction and that of many others. Doubtless the Divine Word can never be administered without confusion, tumult and danger. It is a word of boundless majesty, it works great things and is wonderful on high." This was to be his only guide in his undertaking. He was compelled, so he declared on the same occasion, "to leave the whole matter to God, to resign himself to His guidance and to look on while wind and waves make the ship their plaything."[5]

He frequently repeats later that his professorship at the University had been bestowed upon him by a Divine dispensation and against his will; whereas others were

[1] To Wenceslaus Link, March 19, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 315.

[2] See, for instance, iv., xxvi., 2.

[3] Cp. for instance, his letter to Nicholas Amsdorf, about March 11, 1534, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 23.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 261, in the work "Widder den Radschlag der gantzen Meintzischen Pfafferey."

[5] To Spalatin, February, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 344: "*Data est mihi notio futurœ alicuius insignis turbulœ. . . . Vidi cogitationes eius (Satanœ) artificiosissimas,*" etc.

honoured for their academic labours, he complains to Spalatin of being persecuted; "I teach against my will and yet I have to endure evil things." "What I now do and have done, I was compelled to do." "I have enough sins on my conscience without incurring the unpardonable one of being unfaithful to my office, of refraining from scourging evil and of neglecting the truth to the detriment of so many thousand souls."[1]—At the time when the Disputation at Leipzig was preparing, he tells the same confidant that the matter must be left to God: "I do not desire that it should happen according to our designs, otherwise I would prefer to desist from it altogether." Spalatin must not desire to see the matter judged and settled according to human wisdom, but should remember that we know nothing of "God's plans."[2]

Everything had befallen him in accordance with God's design. It was in accordance therewith, nay, "at the command of God," that he had become a monk, so at least he says later. This, too, was his reason for giving up the office in choir and the recitation of the Breviary. "Our Lord God dragged me by force from the canonical hours, anno 1520."[3] His marriage likewise was the direct result of God's plan. "The Lord suddenly flung me into matrimony in a wonderful way while my thoughts were set in quite another direction."[4] At an earlier date he had, so he said, defended the theses of his Resolutions only "because God compelled him to advance all these propositions."[5]

His first encounter with Dr. Eck took place, so he was persuaded, "at God's behest."[6] "God takes good care that I should not be idle."[7] It is God Who "calls and compels him" to return to Wittenberg after his stay at the Wartburg.[8]—It is not surprising, then, that he also attributes to God's doing the increase in the number of his friends and followers.

[1] To Spalatin, July 9, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 429 f.
[2] In 1519, after February 24, *ibid.*, 2, p. 6.
[3] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 6.
[4] To Wenceslaus Link on June 20, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 201.
[5] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 185.
[6] To Christoph Scheurl, February 20, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 433: "*Dei consilium.*"
[7] To Staupitz, February 20, 1519, *ibid.*, 1, p. 431.
[8] To the Elector Frederick of Saxony, March 7, 1522, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 109 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 298).

The success of his efforts to bring about a great falling away from the Catholic Church he regarded as a clear Divine confirmation of his mission, so that "no higher proof or miracle was needed."[1] Even the disturbance and tumult which resulted bore witness in his favour, since Christ says: "I am come to send a sword." All around him prevailed "discord, revolt and uproar,"[2] because, forsooth, the Gospel was there at work; the calm, unquestioned sovereignty of Popery within its own boundaries was a sure sign of its being the devil's own.[3] "Did I not meet with curses, I should not believe that my cause was from God."[4]

It is evident from these and other like statements how greatly his fame, the increase of his followers and his unexpected success engrossed and intoxicated him. In judging of him we must not under-estimate the effect of the din of applause in encouraging him in his self-suggestion. The cheers of so great a crowd, as Erasmus remarked in a letter to Melanchthon, might well have turned the head even of the humblest man. What anchor could have held the bark exposed to such a storm? Outbursts such as the following, to which Luther gave vent under the influence of the deafening ovation, were only to be expected of such a man as he, when he had once cut himself adrift from the Church: "God has now given judgment . . . and, contrary to the expectation of the whole world, has brought things to such a pass. . . . The position of the Pope grows daily worse, that we may extol the work of God herein."[5] Under the magic influence of the unhoped-for growth of his movement of revolt, he declared it could only be due to a higher power, "which so disposed things that even the gates of hell were unable to prevent them." Not he, but "another man, drives the wheel." It is as clear as day that no man could, single-handed, have achieved so much, and, by "mere word of mouth," done more harm to the Pope, the bishops, priests and monks than all worldly powers hitherto.[6] Christ was working for him so strenuously, so he declares in all

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 280; Erl. ed., 27, p. 217. In 1521.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 281=219. [3] *Ibid.*, p 281=218.
[4] To Spalatin, January 14, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 351.
[5] To the Archbishop of Mayence, December 1, 1521, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 97 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 251).
[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 22, p. 53. "Von welltlicher Uberkeytt," 1523.

seriousness, that he might well calmly await His complete victory over Antichrist; for this reason there was really no need to trouble about the ecclesiastical organisation of the new Church, or to think of all the things it would otherwise have been necessary for him to remember.

His mere success was not the only Divine witness in his favour; Luther was also of opinion that owing to God's notable working, signs and wonders had taken place in plenty in confirmation of the new teaching; such Divine wonders, however, must not be "thrown to the winds."[1] He seems, nevertheless, to have had at one time the intention of collecting and publishing these miracles.[2]

In short, "the first-fruits of the Grace of God," he says, have come upon us; in these he was unwilling that later teachers, who differed from him, should be allowed to participate.[3]

Was not the guidance of Christ also plainly visible in the fact that he, the proclaimer of His Word, had been delivered from so many ambushes on the part of the enemies who lay in wait for him? Such a thought lay at the root of his words to his pupil Mathesius: There was no doubt that poison had frequently been administered to him, but "an important personage had been heard to say, that none had any effect on him." On one occasion, however, when an attempt had been made to poison him, He "Who said, 'If they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them,' blessed him, and preserved him then and afterwards from all mischief."[4] "I also believe," Luther once said, according to Bindseil's Latin "*Colloquia*," that "my pulpit-chair and cushion were frequently poisoned, yet God preserved me."[5] Similar words are recorded in the Diary of Cordatus.[6] This accounts for the strange tales which grew up amongst his pupils and followers of how "God Almighty had always preserved him in a wonderful manner," of how He "had affrighted the knaves" who sought his life, and so forth, of which the early editions of Luther's Works have so much to say.

[1] See below, p. 153 ff. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] To the Elector Frederick and Duke Johann of Saxony, in July, 1524, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 372. "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 263 f. He admits that he has not "the *fulness* of the Spirit."

[4] Mathesius, "Historien," pp. 195', 196.

[5] "Colloq.," ed Bindseil, 3, p. 156. [6] P. 150.

Among the characteristics most highly extolled by his earliest followers as exemplifying his mission must be instanced, first, his inflexible courage, amounting frequently to foolhardiness, in the accomplishment of his set task, viz. the establishing of the Evangel and the destruction of Popery; secondly, his extraordinary capacity for work and the perseverance of which he gave such signal proof in his literary undertakings; thirdly, his entire disregard for temporal advantages, which he himself held up as an example to those of the evangelical preachers whose worldliness had become a reproach to the Lutheran cause.

Very strange and remarkable is the connection between Luther's mysticism and the simple and homely view he took of life; the pleasure with which he welcomed everything good which came in his way—so far as it was free from any trace of Popery—the kindly, practical turn of his manner of thinking and acting when among his own people, and that love for humour and good cheer which so strikingly contrasts with the puritanical behaviour of his opponents, the Anabaptists and fanatics.

To reconcile his mysticism with habits at first blush so divergent would present quite a problem in itself were we not to take into account the fact, that homeliness and humour had been his from the very beginning, whereas his mysticism was a later growth, always to some extent alien to his character. His mysticism he carefully confined to what related to his supposed Divine mission, though at times he does indeed seem to extend indefinitely the range of this mission. Yet, when the duties of his office had cost him pain or tried his temper, he was ever glad to return to the realities of life, and to seek relief in social intercourse or in his family circle.

When it was a question of the working of miracles by the heaven-sent messenger, he was of too practical a turn of mind to appeal to anything but the ostensible tokens of the Divine favour worked around him and on his behalf in proof of the truth of the new Evangel. He carefully avoided attributing any miracles to his own powers, even when assisted by Divine grace, though, occasionally, he seems to imply that, were the need to arise, he might well work wonders by the power of God, were he only to ask it of Him. With the question of miracles and pre-

dictions as proofs of Luther's Divine mission we shall deal later (p. 153 ff.).

While on the one hand Luther's views of miracles and prophecies witness to an error which was not without effect on his persuasion of his Divine mission, on the other his pseudo-mystic notion of his special calling led him superstitiously to see in chance events of history either the extraordinary confirmation of his mission or the celestial condemnation of Popery.

We know that Luther not only shared the superstitions of his contemporaries, but also defended them with all the weight of his great name and literary talents.[1] When at Vienna, in January, 1520, something unusual was perceived in the sky, he at once referred it to "his tragedy," as he had done even previously in similar cases. He also expressed the wish that he himself might be favoured with some such sign. The noisy spirits which had formerly disturbed people had, he believed, been reduced in number throughout the world solely owing to his Evangel. The omnipotence of the devil and the evil he worked on men was, so he thought, to be restrained only by the power of that Word which had again been made known to the world, thanks to his preaching.[2] It was his intention to publish an account of the demoniacal happenings which had taken place in his day and which confirmed his mission; he was only prevented from doing this by want of time.[3] To astrology, unlike Melanchthon, he ever showed himself averse.

Another element which loomed large in his persuasion that he was a prophet was his so-called "temptations," i.e. the mental troubles, which, so he thought, were caused by the devil and which, coinciding as they often did with other sufferings, were sometimes the cause of long fits of misery and dejection.[4]

[1] See especially vol. v., xxxi. Many other proofs will be found scattered throughout our volumes.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 348; 60, p. 31, 70; 53, p. 342 (Letter of the beginning of April, 1525, to the Christians at Antwerp, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 151, and "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 547.

[3] His intention was to collect the "*portenta Satanæ*" in order to make the "*salutaria miracula Evangelii quotidie inundantia*" known everywhere. Thus to Justus Jonas on January 23, 1542, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 429.

[4] Regarding his psychic troubles and hallucinations, see vol. vi., xxxvi.

These temptations in their most extreme form Luther compared with the death-agony. His extraordinary experiences, of which he never understood the pathological cause, were regarded by him as God's own testimony to his election. His conviction was that, by imposing on him these pangs of hell, God was cleansing him for the grand task assigned to him, even as He had done with other favoured souls in the past. When plunged in the abyss of such sufferings he felt like St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, who likewise was buffeted by Satan (vol. i., p. 381 f.), and whom he would fain have emulated in his "revelations" of the Divine mysteries. Only in the sequel, however, will it be possible to describe Luther's pathology for the benefit of those to whom it may be of interest.

All his troubles, whether due to doubt and sadness or to the fury of foes stirred up by Satan against him, he utilised, so he tells us, as an incentive to immerse himself ever more and more in the study of Holy Scripture, to cultivate the understanding bestowed upon him, and to seek its practical applications. "My theology was not all learnt in a day; I was obliged to explore deeper and deeper to acquire it. My temptations helped me, for it is impossible to understand Holy Scripture without experience and temptations. This is what the fanatics and unruly spirits lack, viz. that capital gainsayer the devil, who alone can teach a man this. St. Paul had a devil, who beat him with his fists and drove him by the way of temptation diligently to study Holy Scripture. I have had the Pope, the Universities and all the scholars, and, behind them all, the devil, hanging round my neck; they drove me to the Bible and made me read it until at length I reached the right understanding of it. Unless we have such a devil, we remain mere speculative theologians, for whose precious imaginings the world is not much better."[1] This casual saying of Luther's gives us a good glimpse into his customary process of thought when in presence of troubles and temptations, great or small.

The above passage, moreover, agrees with many similar statements of his, inasmuch as, far from ascribing his doctrine to any actual revelation, he makes its discovery to result from effort on his part, under the guidance of a higher illumination. Luther, less than any other, could scarcely

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 99.

have been unconscious of the gradual change in his views, more particularly at the outset of his career as Evangelist and prophet; at the very least it was clear that, in the earlier period of his higher mission, he had taught much that was borrowed from Popery and which he discarded only later; at that time, as he puts it, he was still "besotted with Popery."

*Periodic Upheaval of Luther's Idea of his Divine Mission.*

Luther's consciousness of his Divine mission found expression with varying degrees of intensity at different periods of his life.

At certain junctures, notably when historic events were impending, it was apt to burst forth, producing in him effects of a character almost terrifying. Such was the case, for instance, in the days which immediately preceded and followed the proclamation of the Bull of Excommunication. At that time it seemed as though every spirit of revolt had entered into him to use him as a tool for defying the authority of the Church. Such was the depth of his persuasion, that he, the excommunicate, was carried away to proclaim his unassailable prophetic rights in tones of the utmost conviction.

Towards the end of his stay at the Wartburg and during the first period of his struggle with the Anabaptists at Wittenberg, we again hear him insisting on his own exalted mission; owing, however, to the mystic illumination of which the fanatics boasted, his claims are now based, not so much on mystical considerations, as on the "outward Word," whose authentic representative he had, by his works, proved himself to be.

The loneliness and gloom of the Wartburg and his "diabolical" experiences there doubtless helped to convince him yet more of the reality of his mission. The ensuing struggle with those of the innovators who differed from him and even threatened to oust him, acted as a further stimulus and aroused his powers of resistance to the utmost. Nor must we forget the threatening attitude of the Imperial authorities at Nuremberg, whom he was resolved to oppose with the greatest determination; only by impressing on his followers that he was something more than human

would it be possible for him successfully to hold in check the hostility of Emperor and Princes. The supposed world-wide success of his venture also dazed him at this critical juncture, a fact which further elucidates the situation.

Triumphantly he cries: "The Lord has already begun to mock at Satan and his slaves. Satan is in truth vanquished, and the Pope, too, with all his abominations! Now our only concern is the soap-bubble which has swelled to such alarming dimensions [the Nuremberg menace]. We believe in Christ, the Son of God, believe in His dominion over life and death. Whom then shall we fear? The first-fruits of victory have already fallen to us; we rejoice at the overthrow of the Papal tyranny, whereas formerly Kings and Princes were content to submit to its oppression; how much easier will it be to vanquish and despise the Princes themselves!"

"If Christ assures us," he continues in this same letter, one of the first dispatched after his "Patmos" at the Wartburg, "that the Father has placed all things under His feet, it is certain that He lieth not; 'all things' must also comprise the mighty ones assembled at Nuremberg, not to speak of that Dresden bubble [Duke George of Saxony]. Let them therefore set about deposing Christ. We, however, will calmly look on while the Father Almighty preserves His Son at His right hand from the face and the tail of these smoking firebrands" (Isa. vii. 4). Should a rising or a tumult among the people ensue "which cannot be suppressed by force, then that will be the Lord's own work; He conceals the danger from the sight of the Princes; and, owing to their blindness and rebellion, He will work such things that methinks all Germany will be deluged with blood. We shall 'set ourselves like a hedge before God in favour of the land and the people' (Ezek. xxii. 30), in this day of His great wrath, wherefore do you and your people pray for us."

These words were addressed to an old Augustinian friend to whom he showed himself undisguisedly and in his true colours. In the same letter he has it that he considers it quite certain that Carlstadt, Gabriel Zwilling and the fanatical Anabaptists were preaching without any real call, in fact, against God's will. To himself he applies the words of our Redeemer: "He Whom God has sent speaketh the words of God" (John iii. 34), and "He that seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him is true" (John vii. 18). Fully convinced of the Divine inspiration and compulsion he exclaims: "For this reason did I yield to necessity and return [from the Wartburg], viz. that I might, if God wills, put an end to this devils' uproar" (of the fanatics).[1]

[1] To Wenceslaus Link, March 19, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 315. Link, as Staupitz's successor in the Vicariate of the Order, had proclaimed at the commencement of the year in the Augustinian chapter at Wittenberg the freedom of religious to forsake their convents and the abolition of the so-called "Corner-Masses," which Luther refers to in the letter in question as being a singular "deed of the Holy Ghost."

If Luther sought to show the fanatics that their fruits bore witness against them and their doctrine, it is worthy of note that Staupitz, his former Superior, about this very time, confronted Luther with the disastrous fruits of his action, in order to dissuade him from the course he was pursuing. Staupitz, who so far had been his patron, had grown apprehensive of the character of the movement. His warning, however, only acted as oil on the flame of the enthusiasm then surging up in Luther. In his reply, dated in May, 1522, we find the real Luther, the prophet full of his own great plans: "You write that my undertaking is praised [by discreditable people], and by those who frequent houses of ill-fame, and that much scandal has been given by my latest writings. I am not surprised at this, neither am I apprehensive. It is certain that we for our part have been careful to proclaim the pure Word without causing any tumult; the good and the bad alike make use of this Word, and this, as you know, we cannot help. . . . For we do what Christ foretold when He commanded the angels to collect and remove out of His Kingdom all scandals. Father, I cannot do otherwise than destroy the Kingdom of the Pope, the Kingdom of abomination and wickedness together with all its train. God is already doing this without us, without any assistance from us, merely by His Word. The end of this Kingdom is come before the Lord. The matter far exceeds our powers of comprehension. . . . Great commotion of minds, great scandals and great signs must follow, in view of God's greatness. But, dear father, I hope this will not trouble you; God's plan is visible in these things and His mighty hand. You will remember that at the outset everybody thought my undertaking suspicious, doubtful and altogether too bad, and yet it has held the field and will hold its own in spite of your apprehensions; only have patience. Satan feels the smart of his wound, and that is why he rages so greatly and sets all at loggerheads. But Christ Who has begun the work will trample him under foot; and the gates of hell will do their worst, but all in vain."

So perverted an application of the promise solemnly made by Christ to the Church of Peter, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, had surely never before been heard. Words such as these would even sound incredible did we not learn from the same letter into what a state of nervous excitement the ban and excommunication had plunged him. At Antwerp, Jacob Probst, one of his followers, was to be burned with two of his comrades, and in various localities Luther's writings, by order of the authorities, were being consigned to the flames. This it was which made him say in his letter: "My death by fire is already under discussion; but I only defy Satan and his myrmidons the more that the day of Christ may be hastened, when an end will be put to Antichrist. Farewell, father, and pray for me. . . . The Evangel is a scandal to the self-righteous and to all who think themselves wise."[1]

[1] To Staupitz at Salzburg, Wittenberg, June 27, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 406

The later occasions on which this peculiar mystic idea asserted itself most strongly and vividly were during the exciting events of the Peasant War of 1525; in 1528, at the time his Evangel was in danger from the Empire, while he was tormented within; his sojourn in the fortress of Coburg during the much-dreaded Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, when he again endured profound mental agony; the period of the Schmalkald negotiations, in 1537, when the Council of Trent had already been summoned, while Luther was suffering much from disease; finally, in the last years of his life, accompanied as they were by recurring friction with the various Courts and hostile parties, when a growing bitterness dominated his spirit.

In this last period of his career the sense of his Divine mission revived in full force, never again to quit him. His statements concerning his mission now bear a more pessimistic stamp, but he nevertheless holds fast to it and allows nothing to disconcert him by any suspicion of a mistake on his part, nor does he betray any trace of his earlier doubts and misgivings.

"We know that it is God's cause," he says in 1541 to the Electoral Chancellor Brück: "God has commenced it and carried it through, and He too will finish it! Whoever does not wish to follow us, let him fall to the rear, with the Emperor and the Turk; all the devils shall gain nothing here, let what God wills befall us."[1]

"It annoys me that they should esteem these things [of the Evangel] as though they were secular, Imperial, Turkish or princely matters to be decided and controlled, bestowed and accepted by reason alone. It is a matter which God and the devil with their respective angels must arrange. Whoever does not believe this will do no good in the business."[2]

When the negotiations at Ratisbon seemed to be exposing the timorous Melanchthon to the "snares of Satan," Luther in his wonted presumptuous fashion wrote to him: "Our cause is not to be controlled by our own action, but only by God's Providence. The Word progresses, prayer is ardent, hope endures, faith conquers, so that verily we cannot but see it, and might even sleep calmly and feast were we not so carnal; for the words of Moses are also addressed to us: 'The Lord will fight for you and you shall hold your peace' (cp. Exod. xiv. 14). It is certain

[1] Beginning of April, "Letters," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 339. Cp. a similar statement made to the Elector on June 24, 1541, *ibid.*, p. 373: "God, Who has begun it without our strength or reason, will carry it out as He sees best" (of the Ratisbon Interim).

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 339, 340.

that the Lord is fighting, that He is slowly and gradually descending from His Throne to the [Last] Judgment which we so anxiously look for. The signs announcing the approaching Judgment are all too numerous. . . . Hence put away all fear. Be strong and glad and untroubled, for the Lord is near. Let them undertake what they please, the Henrys [he is thinking of Henry of Brunswick, an opponent], the bishops, and likewise the Turks and Satan himself. We are children of the kingdom, and we await and honour Him as our Saviour Whom these Henrys spit upon and crucify anew."[1]

In what frame of mind he then was, and what strange judgments he could pass, is seen even more plainly from what he adds concerning a tract he had just published against Duke Henry of Brunswick.

This work, entitled "Wider Hans Worst," is, in style and matter, an attack of indescribable violence on this Catholic prince and Catholics in general. Yet Luther writes of it to Melanchthon: "I have re-read my book against this devil, and I cannot understand what has happened to make me so restrained. I attribute it to my headache which prevented my mind from being carried away on the wings of the storm." The "bloodhound and incendiary assassin," as he calls the Duke, would otherwise have had to listen to a very different song for having compelled Luther to "waste his time on Henry's devil's excrement." That the Duke had been the originator of the appalling number of fires which occurred in the Electorate of Hesse in 1540, both Luther and Melanchthon were firmly convinced. Luther's readiness to cherish the blackest suspicions, his volcanic rage against Catholics, the pessimism of his reiterated cry: "Let everything fall, stand or sink into ruins, as it pleases; let things take their own course,"[2] form a remarkable accompaniment to the thrilling tones in which he again asserts his consciousness of the fulfilment of his Divine mission.

We must here revert to some of Luther's statements concerning the triumphant progress of the Evangel and the determined resistance to be offered to all opposing forces—solemn declarations which attain their full meaning only in the light of his idea of his own Divine mission. We give the gist of the passages already quoted in detail elsewhere. These passages, which reek of revolution, are altogether inspired by the glowing idea of his heavenly mission apart from which they are scarcely comprehensible.

"If war is to come of it, let it come," etc. "Princely foes are delivered up to us as a holocaust in order that they may

[1] On April 12, 1541, "Briefe," *ibid.*, p. 341 f.

[2] On March 26, 1542, to Jacob Probst, "Briefe," 5, p. 451. Similarly on December 3, 1544, to Cordatus, *ibid.*, p. 702.

be rewarded according to their works"; God will "deliver His people even from the fiery furnace of Babylon."[1]

"Let things run on merrily and be prepared for the worst," "whether it be war or revolt, as God's anger may decree."[2]

"Let justice take its course even should the whole world fall into ruins."[3]

"It is said, 'If the Pope fall, Germany will perish.'[4] But what has this to do with me?"

"It is God's Word. Let what cannot stand, fall, and what is not to remain, pass away." "It is a great thing," he continues, "that for the sake of the young man [the Divine Redeemer] this Jewish Kingdom and the Divine Service which had been so gloriously instituted and ordered should fall to the ground." Not Christ alone, he says, had spoken of His work in the same way that he (Luther) did of his own, but St. Paul also, in spite of his grief over the Jews, had, like himself, constantly declared: "The Word is true, else everything must fall into ruins; for He Who sent me and commanded me to preach, will not lie."[5]

His followers recalled his words, that it were better "all churches, convents and foundations throughout the world should be rooted out" than that "even one soul should be seduced by such [Popish] error."[6] And again: "Are we to forswear the truth?" "Would it be strange were the rulers, the nobles and laity to fall upon the Pope, the bishops, priests and monks and drive them out of the land?" They had brought it upon themselves and it was necessary "to pray for them."[7] But prayer might not suffice. If no improvement took place, then "a general destruction of all the foundations and convents would be the best reformation."[8]

[1] From the letter to Justus Jonas of September 20, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 268.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 279; Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 8, in the "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," 1531.

[3] "Considerations on the proposed Conditions of Peace," of August, 1531(?), "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 76. See above, p. 45, n. 5.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 33, p. 606; Erl. ed., 48, p. 342, in the Exposition of St. John's Gospel, 1530–1532.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 605 *seq.* = 342.

[6] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 253; Erl. ed., $7^2$, p. 222.

[7] *Ibid.*, 6, p. 621 = $24^2$, p. 46.

[8] "Werke," Erl. ed., $7^2$, p. 121.

These outbursts date almost all from the time of the Diet of Augsburg, or that immediately succeeding it. They might, however, be compared with some earlier utterances not one whit less full of fanaticism; for instance, where he says to the Elector, in 1522: "Not only the spiritual but also the secular power must yield to the Evangel, whether willingly or unwillingly";[1] or the opening sentences of his "Bull of the Evening Feed of our Most Holy Lord the Pope" (1522): "After having had to put up with so many hawkers of bulls, cardinals . . . and the countless horde of extortioners and swindlers and knaves whom the Rhine would hardly suffice to drown . . .!"[2]

A flood of rage and passionate enthusiasm for his mission finds vent in these words: "If they hope ever to exterminate the Turks they must begin with the Pope."[3] "The Pope drives the whole world from the Christian faith to his devilish lies, so that the Pope's rule is ten times worse than that of the Turk for both body and soul."[4]

Previous to this, in February, 1519, he reveals in the following words the agitation and ferment going on within him: "I adjure you," he says to his friend Spalatin, "if you would think aright of the Evangel, not to imagine that such a cause can be fought out without tumults, scandal and rebellion. You cannot make a pen out of a sword, or peace of war. The Word of God is a sword, war, ruin, scandal, destruction, poison and, as we read in the Old Covenant, 'Like to a bear in the road and a lioness in the wood,' so it withstands the sons of Ephraim."[5]

No Apostle or Prophet ever laid claim to a Divine authorisation for their preaching in language so violent. Indeed, mere phrases and extracts from his writings scarcely suffice to give a true picture of the intensity of his prepossession for his supposed Divine calling and of his furious hatred of his opponents. It would, in fact, be necessary to read in their entirety certain of his polemical works. That they have not done so is the explanation why so many know only a polished Luther and have scarcely an inkling of the fierceness of the struggle which centred round his conscious-

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 111 ("Briefwechsel," 3, pp. 298, 304).
[2] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 8, p. 691; Erl. ed., $24^2$, p. 168.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 709=189. [4] *Ibid.*
[5] Thus it is that he excuses the blustering character of his writings against those who defended the Church.

ness of a Divine mission, and of the depth of his animosity against those who dared to gainsay him.

Nor was this consciousness of his without its effects on those around him. During the long years of his public life, it kindled the passion of thousands and contributed largely to the Peasant Revolt and the unhappy religious wars which followed later. Indirectly it was also productive of disaster for the Empire by forcing it to make terms with the turbulent elements within, and by preventing it from displaying a united front against the Turks and other enemies without. On the other hand, in the case of very many who honestly looked on Luther as a real reformer of the Church, it also served to infuse into them new enthusiasm for what they deemed the Christian cause.

Its effect on Luther's character in later life was such as to make him, in his writings to the German people, rave like a maniac of the different forms of death best suited for Pope and Cardinals, viz. being hanged on the gallows with their tongues torn out, being drowned in the Tyrrhenean Sea, or "flayed alive."[1] "How my flesh creeps and how my blood boils," he cries, after one such outburst.[2]

If we remember the frenzy with which he carried out his religious enterprise, the high tension at which he ever worked and his inexhaustible source of eloquence, it is easy to fancy ourselves face to face with something more than human. The real nature of the spirit which, throughout Luther's life, was ever so frantically at work within him, must for ever remain a secret. One eye alone, that of the All-seeing, can pierce these depths. Anxious Catholic contemporaries of Luther's strongly suspected that they had to deal with one possessed by the evil spirit. This opinion was openly voiced, first by Johann Nathin, Luther's contemporary at the Erfurt monastery, by Emser, Cochlæus, Dungersheim and certain other early opponents, and then by several others whose testimony will be heard later (vol. iv., xxvii., 1).

Catholic contemporaries also urged that his claim to a Divine mission was mere impudence. A simple monk, hitherto quite unknown to the world, so they said, breaks

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, pp. 176, 229, 242, in the work "Das Bapstum vom Teuffel gestifft."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 242.

his vows and dares to set himself in opposition to the universal Church. A man, whose repute was not of the best, and who not only lacked any higher attestation, but actually exhibited in his doctrine of evangelical freedom, in the disorderly lives of his followers and in the dissensions promoted by his fanatical and stormy rhetoric, those very signs which our Redeemer had warned His disciples would follow false prophets—such a man, they argued, could surely not be a reformer, but was rather a destroyer, of Christendom; he perceives not that the Church, for all her present abuses and corruption, has nevertheless all down the ages scattered throughout the world the Divine blessings committed to her care by a promise which shall never fail, and that she will soon rise again purer and more beautiful than ever, for the lasting benefit of mankind.

Luther, on the contrary, sought to base his claim to a Divine mission on the abuses rampant in Popery, which, he would have it, was altogether under the dominion of the devil and quite beyond redemption.

### 2. His Mission Alleged against the Papists

Luther, subsequent to his apostasy, accustomed himself to speak of Catholicism in a fashion scarcely credible. He did not shrink even from the grossest and most impudent depreciation of the Church of the Popes. His incessant indulgence in such abuse calls for some examination into its nature and the mental state of which it was a product.

#### *The Pope and the Papacy.*

The Roman Curia, Luther repeatedly declared, did not believe one word of all the truths of religion; at the faithful who held fast to Revelation they scoffed and called them good simpletons ("*buoni cristiani*"); they knew nothing either of the Creed or of the Our Father, and from all the ecclesiastical books put together not as much could be learnt as from one page of Martin Luther's Catechism.

"Mark this well," he declared as early as 1520 in his work "Von dem Bapstum tzu Rome," of all that is ordered of God not one jot or tittle is observed at Rome; indeed, they mock at it as folly when anyone pays any attention to it. They don't mind a bit that the Gospel and the faith of Christ are perishing through-

out the world, and would not lift a finger to prevent it.[1] The Popes are simply "Epicureans," so that, naturally, almost all those who return from Rome bring back home with them an "Epicurean faith." "For this at least is certain, viz. that the Pope and the Cardinals, together with their schools of knaves, believe in nothing at all; in fact, they smile when they hear faith mentioned."[2]

"What cares the Pope about prayer and God's Word? He has his own god to serve, viz. the devil. But this is a mere trifle. . . . What is far worse, and a real masterpiece of all the devils in hell, is, that he usurps the authority to set up laws and articles of faith. . . . He roars, as though chock-full of devils, that whosoever does not obey him and his Romish Church cannot be saved. . . . Papistically, knavishly, nay, in a truly devilish way, does the Pope, like the stupid scoundrel he is, use the name of the holy Roman Church, when he really means his school of knaves, his Church of harlots and hermaphrodites, the devil's own hotchpotch. . . . For such is the language of his Romish Church, and whoever has to do with the Pope and the Roman See must first learn this or else he fares badly. For the devil, who founded the Papacy, speaks and works everything through the Pope and the Roman See."[3]

His "Heer-Predigt widder den Türcken," in 1529, supplied him with the occasion for the following aside: "The Pope's doctrine is mere spiritual murder and not one whit better than the teaching and blasphemy of Mohammed or the Turks. . . . We have nothing but devils on either side and everywhere."[4] "They even try to force us poor Christians at the point of the sword to worship the devil and blaspheme Christ. Other tyrants have at least this in their favour, that they crucify the Lord of Glory ignorantly, like the Turks, the heathen and the Jews . . . but they [the Papists], say: We know that Christ's words and acts testify against us, but nevertheless we shall not endure His Word, or yield to it."[5] "I believe the Pope is the devil incarnate in disguise; for he is Antichrist. For, as Christ is true God and man, so Antichrist is the incarnation of the devil."[6]

"The superstition of the Pope exceeds that of the Jews." Though the Pope drags countless souls down to hell, yet we may not say to him: "For shame! Why act you thus?" "Had not his prestige been overthrown by the Word [i.e. by my preaching] even the devil would have vomited him forth. But this deliverance [from the Pope] we esteem a small matter and have become ungrateful. God, however, will send other forms of darkness to avenge this ingratitude; we still have this consolation, that the Last Day cannot be far distant; for the prophecy

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 287 f.; Erl. ed., 27, p. 90.
[2] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 147.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 163 f.
[4] *Ibid.*, Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 195 f.; Erl. ed., 31, p. 119.
[5] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 283.
[6] *Ibid.*, 60, p. 180.

of Daniel has been entirely fulfilled, where he describes the Papacy as though he had actually seen its doings."[1]

"At Rome," so he assures his readers, "they pull the noses of us German fools," and then say, that "it is of Divine institution that none can be made bishop without the authority of Rome. I can only wonder that Germany . . . has a farthing left for this horde of unspeakable, intolerable Roman fools, scoundrels and robbers."[2] "Worse even than this rapacious seizing of the money of foreigners is the Pope's usurped right of deciding matters of faith. He acts just as he pleases in accordance with the imaginary interior inspirations which he believes he receives." "He does just the same as Thomas Münzer and the Anabaptists, for he treads under foot the outward Word of God, trusts entirely to higher illumination and gives vent to his own fond inventions against Holy Scripture; which is the reason why we blame him. We care not for mere human thoughts; what we want is the outward Word."[3]

"In short, what shall I say? No error, superstition or idolatry is too gross to be admitted and accepted; at Rome they even honour the Pope as God. And the heathen also had a god, whose name it was not lawful to utter."[4]

### *The Catholics.*

If we turn from the Pope-God or Pope-devil to the Papists, from the Roman Curia to the Catholics, we find them scourged in similar language.

Amidst a wealth of imagery quite bewildering to the mind, one idea emerges clearly, viz. that he has been summoned by God for the purpose of rebuilding Christianity from the very foundation. Nothing but such a mission could justify him in forcing upon himself and others the belief, that the existing Church had been utterly corrupted by the devil and that everybody who dared to oppose him was inspired by Satan.

"No one can be a Papist unless he is at the very least a murderer, robber or persecutor," for "he must agree" that the "Pope and his crew are right in burning and banishing people,"[5] etc. The worst thing about the Papists is the Mass; he would rather he had "kept a brothel, or been a robber, than have sacrificed and blasphemed Christ for fifteen years by saying Mass."[6]

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 404 *seq.*
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 288; Erl. ed., 27, p. 91.
[3] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 27, p. 77.
[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 77.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 263.
[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 106.

Their bloodthirstiness is beyond belief. "They would not care a scrap were no Prince or ruler left in Germany, and were the whole land bathed in blood, so long as they were free to exercise their tyranny and lead their godless and shameless life."[1] So shameless is their life that the morals of the Lutherans glitter like gold in comparison. Yea, "our life even when it reeks most of sin is better than all their [the Papists'] sanctity, though it should seem to smell as sweet as balsam."[2] The Catholics had destroyed the Baptism instituted by Christ, and replaced it by a baptism of works, hence their doctrine is as pernicious as that of the Anabaptists, nay, is exactly on a level with that of the Jews.[3]

The Catholics profess "unbelief in God," and "put to death those guileless Christians who refuse to countenance such idolatry"; they are "not fit to be compared with oxen or asses," seeing that they exalt "their self-chosen works," "far above God's commandment. For in addition to the idolatry and ungodly teaching whereby they daily outrage and blaspheme God, they do not perform any works of charity towards their neighbour, nay, would rather leave anyone to perish in want than stretch out a hand to help him. Again, they are as careful not to deviate by a hair's breadth from their man-made ordinances, rules and commands as were the Jews with regard to the Sabbath. . . . They make no scruple of cheating their neighbour of his money and goods in order to fill their own belly. . . . Such perverse and crazy saints, more foolish than ever ox or ass, are all those, Mohammedans, Turks or whatever else they be called, who refuse to listen to or receive Christ."[4]

It was Luther that Dr. Jonas had heard, on one occasion at table, express the opinion concerning the Papists: "Young fellows, take note of this definition: A Papist is a liar and murderer, nay, the devil himself. Hence they are not to be trusted, for they thirst for our blood."[5]

Luther himself assures us that "the blindness of the Papists and the anger of God against the Papacy was terrible." "Christians, redeemed by the Blood of Christ, put away this blood and worshipped the crib, surely an awful fall! If this had happened amongst the heathen it would have been regarded as monstrous."[6]

The Catholics, Luther taught, never pray, in fact, they do not know how to pray but only how to blaspheme. We find other almost incredible allegations born of his fancy and voiced in a sermon in 1524, of which we have a transcript. "They taught the Our Father, but warned us not to use it [by instructing us to get others to pray for us in our stead]. It is true that for many years I shouted ['bawled,' he says elsewhere] in the monastery [in choir], but never did I pray. They mock the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 260.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 263.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., $19^2$, p. 155. [4] *Ibid.*, $20^2$, p. 233.
[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 83.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 404.

Lord God with their prayers. Never did they approach God with their hearts so as to pray for anything in faith."[1]

Had it been possible for a man to be saved in Popery? He, Luther, replies that this might have happened because "some laymen" may have "held the crucifix in front of the dying man and said: Look up to Jesus, Who died on the cross for you. By this means many a dying man had turned to Christ in spite of having previously believed in the false, miraculous signs [which the devil performs in Popery] and acted as an idolator. Such, however, were lucky."[2] He admits incidentally that "many of our forefathers" had been saved in this exceptional way, though only such as "had been led astray into error, but had not clung to it."[3] In any case it was a miracle. "Those pious souls," "many of whom had by God's grace been wonderfully preserved in the true faith in the midst of Popery," had been saved, so he fancies, in much the same way as "Abraham in Ur of the Chaldeans, and Lot in Sodom."[4]

Now, however, matters stood differently; thanks to his mission light had dawned again, and the unbelief of the Catholics was therefore all the more reprehensible. In the heat of his polemic Luther goes so far as to accuse the Papists who oppose him of the sin against the Holy Ghost. At any rate they were acting against their conscience, as he had pointed out before. He also hints that theirs is that worst sin, of which Christ declares (Matt. xii. 31), that it can be forgiven neither in this world nor in the next. The greater part of a sermon on this text which he preached at Wittenberg, in 1528 or 1529, deals with this criminal blindness on the part of Catholics, this deliberate turning away from the truth of the Holy Ghost to which Matthew refers. Here, as elsewhere, Luther's presupposition is: I teach "the bright Evangel with which even they can find no fault"; I preach "nothing but what is plain to all and so clearly grounded on Scripture that they themselves are forced to admit it"; "what is so plainly proved by the Holy Ghost" that it stands out as a "truth known to all." He proceeds: "When I was a learned Doctor I did not believe there was such a thing on earth as the sin against the Holy Ghost, for I never imagined or believed it was possible to find a heart that could be so wicked." But "now the Papal horde" has descended to this, for they "blaspheme and lie against their conscience"; they "are unable to refute our Evangel or to advance anything against it," "yet they knowingly oppose our teaching out of waywardness and hatred of the truth, so that no admonition, counsel, prayer or chastisement is of any avail." "Thus openly to smite the Holy Ghost on the mouth," nay, "to spit in His Face," is to emulate the treachery of Judas in the depth of their "obstinate and venomous hearts"; for such it was "forbidden to pray,"

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 432.
[2] Cp. Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," $2^2$, p. 269.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 5, p. 346 f.
[4] *Ibid.*, 46, p. 10.

according to 1 John v. 16, because this would be to "insult the spirit of grace and tread under foot the Son of God." The Papists richly deserve that the "Holy Ghost should forsake them," and that they should go "wantonly to their destruction according to their desire." In short, "It is better for people to be sunk in sin, to be prostitutes and utter scamps, for at least they may yet come to a knowledge of the truth; but these devil's saints who go to Divine worship full of good works, when they hear the Holy Ghost openly testifying against them, strike Him on the mouth and say: it is all heresy and devilry."[1]

The tone of hatred and of blind prejudice in favour of his cause which here finds utterance may be explained to some extent by his experience during the sharp struggles of conscience through which he was then going, and which formed the worst crisis of his inner states of terror. (See vol. v., xxxii., 4.) Nor must the connection be overlooked between his apparent confidence here and the attempt which he makes in one passage of the sermon to justify theologically his radical subversion of olden doctrine. The brief argument runs as follows: "From St. Paul everyone can infer that it cannot be achieved by works, otherwise the Blood of Christ is made of no account." Hence the holiness-by-works of the Catholics was an abomination.[2]

On another occasion Luther, speaking of the wilful blindness of the Catholics, declared that "God's untold wrath must sooner or later fall upon such Epicurean pigs and donkeys"; the devil must be a spirit of tremendous power to incite them "deliberately to withstand God." They say and admit: "'That is, I know, the Word of God, but even though it is the Word of God I shall not suffer it, listen to it, nor regard it, but shall reprove it and call it heretical, and whoever is determined to obey God in this matter . . . him I will put to death or banish.' I could never have believed there was such a sin."[3]

As such declarations of the wilful obstinacy of the Catholics are quite commonly made by him, we are tempted to assume that such was really his opinion; if so, we are here face to face with a remarkable instance of what his self-deception was capable.

[1] The passages quoted stand in the following order: pp. 77, 81, 82, 77, 78, 82. Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 28, p. 18 f.

[2] P. 81.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 29, p. 8.

Even at the Wartburg, however, he was already on the road to such an idea, for, while still there, he had declared that the Papists were unworthy to receive the truth which he preached: "Had they been worthy of the truth, they would long ago have been converted by my many writings." "If I teach them they only revile me; I implore and they merely mock at me; I scold them and they grow angry; I pray for them and they reject my prayer; I forgive them their trespass and they will have none of my forgiveness; I am ready to sacrifice myself for them and yet they only curse me. What more can I do than Christ?"[1]

It is true that according to him the Papists were ignorant to the last degree, and such ignorance had indeed always prevailed under Popery. "I myself have been a learned Doctor of theology and yet I never understood the Ten Commandments aright. Nay, there have been many celebrated Doctors who were not sure whether there were nine or ten or eleven Commandments; much less did they know anything of the Gospel or of Christ."[2]

Still, this appalling ignorance on the part of the Papists did not afford any excuse or ground for charitable treatment. Their malice, particularly that of the Popes, is too great. "The Popes are a pot-boil of the very worst men on earth. They boast of the name of Christ, St. Peter and the Churches and yet are full of the worst devils in hell, full, absolutely full, so full that they drivel, spew and vomit nothing but devils."[3]

A passage in the "Table-Talk" collected by Mathesius and recently published, shows that Luther considered his frenzied anti-popery as the most suitable method of combating Popish errors; "Philip [Melanchthon] isn't as yet angry enough with the Pope," he said some time in the winter of 1542–43; "he is moderate by nature and always acts with moderation, which may possibly be of some use, as he himself hopes. But *my* storming (*impetus*) knocks the bottom out of the cask; *my* way is to fall upon them with clubs . . . for the devil can only be vanquished by contempt. Enough has been written and said to the weak, as

[1] Letter in 1521 to "the poor little flock of Christ at Wittenberg," before August 12, "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 213; Erl. ed., 39, p. 128 ("Briefwechsel," 3, p. 217).

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 14, p. 158.

[3] *Ibid.*, $26^2$, p. 145.

for the hardened, nothing is of any avail . . . I rush in with all my might, but against the devil."[1]

His attitude towards scholarly Catholics was very apparent in the later episodes of his controversy with Erasmus.[2]

After having charged Popes and Cardinals with lack of faith, it can be no matter for surprise that he should have represented Erasmus as an utter infidel and a preacher of Epicureanism. The pretexts upon which Luther based this charge had been triumphantly demolished by Erasmus, and only Luther's prejudice in favour of his own mission to save Christendom from destruction could have led him to describe Erasmus as a depraved fellow, who personified all the infidelity and corruption of the Papacy.

"This man learned his infidelity in Rome," Luther ventured to say of him; hence his wish "to have his Epicureanism praised." "He is the worst foe of Christ that has arisen for the last thousand years."[3] In 1519, before Erasmus took the field against him, Luther had written to him, praising him, and, in the hope of securing his co-operation, had said: "You are our ornament and our hope. . . . Who is there into whose mind Erasmus has not penetrated, who does not see in him a teacher, or over whom he has not established his sway? You are displeasing to many, but therein I discern the gifts of our Gracious God. . . . With these my words, barbarous as they are, I would fain pay homage to the excellence of your mind to which we, all of us, are indebted. . . . Please look on me as a little brother in Christ, who is wholly devoted to you and loves you dearly."[4]

On another occasion Luther abuses his opponent as follows: "The only foundation of all his teaching is his desire to gain the applause of the world; he weights the scale with ignorance and malice." "What is the good of reproaching him with being on the same road as Epicurus, Lucian and the sceptics? By doing so I merely succeeded in rousing the viper, and in its fury against me it gave birth to the *Viperaspides* [i.e. the "*Hyperaspistes*"]. In Italy and at Rome he sucked in the milk of the Lamiæ and Megæræ and now no medicine is of any avail." Even in what Erasmus says concerning the Creed, we see the "*os et organum Satanæ*." He may be compared with the enemy in the Gospel, who, while men slept, sowed cockel in the field. We can understand now how Sacramentarians, Donatists, Arians, Anabaptists, Epicureans and so forth have again made their appearance. He sowed his seed and then disappeared. And yet he stands in high honour with Pope and Prince. "Who would

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 307.

[2] Cp. vol. iv., xxiii., 1, where Luther's attitude to Erasmus subsequent to the publication of "*De servo arbitrio*" (1525) is treated of more fully.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 104 ff. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 301.

[4] On March 28, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 489 f.

have believed that the hatred of Luther was so strong ? A poor man is made great simply through Luther."[1]

This letter Erasmus described in the title of his printed reply as "*Epistola non sobria Martini Lutheri.*" Others, he says, might well explain it as a mental aberration, or as due to the influence of some evil demon.[2]

Luther, quite undismayed, continued to deny that Erasmus was in any sense a believer : "He regards the Christian religion and doctrine as a comedy or tragedy" ; he is "a perfect counterfeit and image of Epicurus" ; to this "incarnate scoundrel, God —the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—is merely ludicrous." "Whereas I did not take the trouble to read most of the other screeds published against me, but merely put them to the basest use that paper can be put—which indeed was all they were worth—I read through the whole of the '*Diatribe*' of Erasmus, though I was often tempted to throw it aside." He, like Democritus, the cynical heathen philosopher, looks on our whole theology as nothing better than a fairy tale.[3]

We may well be permitted to regard such statements made by Luther in his later years concerning the Catholics more as the result of a delusion than as deliberate falsehoods. It may be that Luther gradually persuaded himself that such was really the case. If this be so, we must, however, admit with Döllinger "the unparalleled perversion and darkening of Luther's judgment" ; this, adds Döllinger, would explain "much in his statements which must otherwise appear enigmatical."[4] Considerations such as those we have seen him (p. 121 ff.) allege concerning the truth of his cause being proved by its success, could scarcely have impressed any save an unsettled mind such as his. He seems to have accustomed himself to explaining the complex and highly questionable movement at the head of which he stood in a light other than the true one, so much so that he could declare : "God knows all this is not my doing, a fact of which the whole world should have been aware long ago."[5] Brimful of the enthusiasm he had imbibed at the

[1] Luther to Amsdorf about March 11, 1534, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 8 ff. The letter was published by Luther.

[2] "*Quodsi Martinus illud sibi proposuit, persuadere mundo Erasmum hoc agere callidis artibus et insidiosis cuniculis, ut omnes Christianos adducat in odium veræ religionis, frustra nititur. Citius enim persuaserit omnibus se aut odio lymphatum esse aut mentis morbo teneri, aut a sinistro quopiam agitari genio.*" "*Purgatio adversus Epistolam non sobriam Martini Lutheri.*" "Opp.," Lugd. Batav., t. 10, col. 1557.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 104 ff.

[4] "Die Reformation," 3, p. 264.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 641 ; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 162.

Wartburg he wrote, from Wittenberg, on June 27, 1522, in a similar tone to Staupitz, who was then Benedictine Abbot at Salzburg: "God has undertaken it [the destruction of the abomination of the kingdom of the Pope] without our help and without human aid, merely by the Word. Its end has come before the Lord. The matter is beyond our reason or understanding, hence it is useless to expect all to grasp it. For the sake of God's power it is meet and just that people's minds be deeply stirred and that there should be great scandals and great signs. Dear father, do not let this disturb you; I am hopeful. You see God's plan in these matters and His Mighty Hand. Remember how my cause from the outset seemed to the world doubtful and intolerable, and how, notwithstanding, from day to day it has gained the upper hand more and more. It will also gain the upper hand in what you now anticipate with misplaced apprehension; just you wait and see. Satan feels the smart of the wound inflicted on him, that is why he rages so furiously and throws everything into confusion. But Christ Who began the work will tread him under foot in defiance of all the gates of hell."[1]

From the very outset of his career Luther had been paving the way for this delusion as to the true character of his Catholic opponents, his own higher mission and God's overthrow of all gainsayers.

In 1518 he declared, as a sort of prelude to the idea of his Divine mission, that the Catholic Doctors who opposed him were sunk in "chaotic darkness," and that he preached "the one true light, Jesus Christ."[2] Even in 1517, in publishing his Resolutions, he had said of the setting up of his Indulgence Theses, that the Lord Himself had compelled him to advance all this. "Let Christ see to it whether it be His cause or mine."[3]

His pupils and Wittenberg adherents treasured up such assurances of his extraordinary mission in order to excite their own enthusiasm. Even Albert Dürer, who was further removed from the sphere of his influence, spoke of him in

[1] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 406 f.
[2] To Spalatin, May 18, 1518, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 193.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 527: "*Christus viderit, suane sint an mea.*"

the third decade of the century as "a man enlightened by the Holy Ghost and one who has the Spirit of God."[1] Long after his death the chord which he had struck continued to vibrate among those who were devoted to him. On his tomb at Wittenberg might be read: "Taught by the Divine inspiration and called by God's Word, he disseminated throughout the world the new light of the Evangel." Old, orthodox Lutheranism honoured him as God's own messenger; the Protestant Pietists, at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, attributed to Luther, to quote the words of Gottfried Arnold, a truly "apostolic call," received by means of a "direct inspiration, impulse or Divine apprehension"; this Divine mission, Arnold says, was "generally" admitted, although he himself, as a staunch Pietist, was willing to allow to Luther "the power and illumination of the Spirit" only during the period previous to the dispute with Carlstadt, who was equally enlightened from above. "For a while," says Arnold, i.e. for about seven years, Luther was "in very truth mightily guided by God and employed as His instrument."[2]

Other Lutheran theologians, Gerhard and Calovius, for instance, refused to see in Luther's case anything more than an indirect call; about the middle of the eighteenth century the editor of Luther's Works, Consistorialrat Prof. J. G. Walch, of Jena, asserted openly of Luther's mission that he "was not called directly by God as had been the case with the Prophets and Apostles"; his call had only in so far been beyond the ordinary in that "God, after decreeing in His Divine plans the Reformation, had chosen Luther as His tool"; hence Luther's providential mission was only to be inferred from the "divinity of the Reformation," which, however, was apparent to all who "did not wantonly and maliciously shut their eyes to facts." Extraordinary gifts had not indeed been bestowed upon him by God, though he had all the "gifts pertaining to his office" in rich measure, and likewise the "sanctifying gifts" and the "spiritual graces"; the latter Walch then proceeds to dissect with painstaking exactitude.[3]

[1] Vol. ii., p. 41 f.

[2] "Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie," 2, Frankfurt, 1699, p. 42 (with the epitaph quoted above), and p. 75.

[3] "Ausführliche Nachricht von M. Luthero," in vol. xxiv. of his edition of Luther, pp. 379, 376.

Such a view marks the transition to the modern conception of Luther so widely prevalent among Protestants to-day, which, while extolling him as the powerful instrument of the Reformation, naturalises him, so to speak, and takes him down from the pedestal of the God-illumined teacher and prophet, who proclaims a Divine interpretation of Scripture binding upon all.[1]

[1] How little this view of Luther fits in with his own estimate of himself may be seen from the following statements which occur in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1531, vol. i., in Irmischer's ed.): Heretics, owing to a delusion of Satan, consider their doctrines as absolutely certain; founders of sects, more particularly, will never allow themselves to be converted by our proofs from Scripture, as we see in the case of the fanatics; so well does the devil know how to assume the shape of Christ. "I, however, am persuaded by the Spirit of Christ, that my doctrine of Christian righteousness is true and certain (*sum certus et persuasus per spiritum Christi*, p. 288); therefore I cannot listen to anything to the contrary." Hence "the Pope, the Cardinals, bishops, and monks and the whole synagogue of Satan, and in particular the founders of the Religious Orders (some of whom, nevertheless, God was able to save by a miracle), confuse men's consciences and are worse than false apostles" (p. 83). Like St. Paul he pronounces anathema on all angels and men who rise up to destroy the Gospel preached by Paul; of such subverters the world is now, alas, full (p. 89). By the fanatics, he says (p. 90), he too was accounted such a one, though he only paid homage to pure Scripture as to his "Queen" (p. 93). "Like Paul I declare with the utmost certainty every doctrine to be anathema which differs from my own. . . . Its founder is the messenger of Satan, and is anathema." "*Sic nos cum Paulo securissime et certissime pronuntiamus, omnem doctrinam esse maledictam, quæ cum nostra dissonat. . . . Qui igitur aliud evangelium vel contrarium nostro docet, missum a diabolo et anathema esse confidenter dicimus*" (p. 94).

Just as in Paul's day the Galatians had become inconstant, so "some, who at the outset had accepted the Word with joy and among whom were many excellent men, had now suddenly fallen away," because the Lord had withdrawn His Grace (p. 99). They bring forward as objections against us the belief of the Church and of antiquity. But "should Peter and Paul themselves, or an angel from heaven, teach differently, yet I know for a certainty that my teaching is not human but Divine, i.e. that I ascribe all to God and nothing to man" (p. 102). "It is true that this very argument prejudices our cause to-day more than anything else. If we are to believe only him who teaches the pure Word of God, not the Pope, or the Fathers, or Luther, whom then are we to believe? Who is to reassure man's conscience as to where the true Word of God is preached, whether amongst us or amongst our opponents? For the latter also boast of having and teaching the true Word of God. We do not believe the Papists because they do not and cannot teach the Word of God. They, on the other hand, declare us to be the greatest heretics. What then is to be done? Is every fanatic to be permitted to teach whatever comes into his head, while the world refuses to hear us or to endure our teaching?" In spite of our assurances of the certainty of our teaching, he complains, they call our boasting devilish; if we yield, then they, the Papists and the fanatics, grow proud and become still more

*Apocalyptico-Mystic Vesture.*

Against Catholics Luther also used certain pseudo-mystic elements drawn from his consciousness of a higher mission and based principally on Holy Scripture.

In this respect his one-sided study of the Bible explains much, and should avail to mitigate our judgment on him. Stories and scenes from the Old Testament, incidents from the heroic times of the prophets, the lives of the patriarchs, to which he had devoted special Commentaries, so engrossed his mind, that, unwittingly, he came to clothe all in the garb of the prominent figures of Bible history. He was fond of imagining himself as one of those privileged heroes living in the same world of miracles as of yore.

settled in their error. "Therefore let each one see that he is convinced of the truth of his own calling and doctrine, so that, like Paul, he may venture to say with absolute certainty and conviction: 'If an angel from heaven,' etc." The revelation of the Gospel is made to each one individually, and is "effected by God Himself, yet the outward Word must precede and then the inward Spirit will follow. . . . The Holy Ghost is given for the revealing of the Word, but the outward Word must first have been heard" (p. 114).

In opposition to the fanatics Luther is fond of tracing back his own great illumination, which had brought salvation to the world, to the preliminary action of the outward Word of Holy Scripture on his mind. Towards the end of his life he wrote (on May 7, 1545) to Amsdorf: "I glory in the certainty that the Son of God is seated at the right hand of the Father and most sweetly speaks to us here below by His Spirit even as He spoke to the Apostles, and that therefore we are His disciples, and hear the Word from His lips. . . . We hear the Divine Majesty speaking through the word of the Gospel. The angels and the whole creation of God congratulate us on this, while the Pope, that monster of the devil, wobbles in sadness and fear and all the gates of hell tremble with him" ("Briefe," 5, p. 737). At an earlier date, in 1522, he had declared: "This is what you must say: Whether Luther is a saint or a scamp does not matter to me; his doctrine is not his, but Christ's . . . leave the man out of the question, but acknowledge the doctrine" ("Von beider Gestallt des Sacramentes," "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 40). "I don't care in the very least whether a thousand Augustines or a thousand Harry-Churches are against me, but I am convinced that the true Church clings to the Word of God as I do" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 256; Erl. ed., 28, p. 379. "Against King Henry VIII." "I was he to whom God first revealed it" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 8).

J. A. Möhler rightly remarks: "Seeing that it was Luther's design to break with the existing, visible Church, it was essential that he should give the first place to the invisible Church and look on himself as directly sent by God." He points out that Calvin also appealed to a direct mission, and quotes from his answer to Sadolet's letter to the inhabitants of Geneva: "*ministerium meum, quod Dei vocatione fundatum ac sanctum fuisse non dubito*"; "*ministerium meum, quod quidem a Christo esse novi.*" "Opusc.," pp. 106, 107 ("Symbolik," 49, n 1).

If a she-ass could speak to Balaam then how much more can he, Luther, proclaim the truth by the power from on high, even though the whole world should be astonished at the solitary figure who dares to stand up against it. He calls to mind, that the prophet Elias was almost alone in refusing to bow the knee to Baal. Discouraged by the opposition he met with from the Catholic party he was ready to liken himself to Jeremias the prophet, and like him to say: "We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed, let us forsake her."[1]

In the New Testament Christ Himself and the Apostles were Luther's favourite types, because, like himself, they were against a whole world whose views were different. The fact that they were alone did not, he says, diminish their reputation, and their success proved their mission. Like Paul and Athanasius and Augustine it is his duty to withstand the stream of false opinions: "My rock, that on which I build, stands firm and will not totter or fall in spite of all the gates of hell; of this I am certain. . . . Who knows what God wills to work by our means?"[2]

When, at different periods of his public career, and in preparing his various works for the press, he had occasion to ruminate on the biblical questions connected with Antichrist, he was wont also to consider the prophecies of Daniel on the end of the world. By dint of a diligent comparison of all the passages on the abominations of the latter days he came to find therein the corruption of the Papacy fully described, even down to the smallest details, with an account of its overthrow, and, consequently, also of his own mission. In the same way that he saw the impending fall of the Turkish Empire predicted, so also he recognised that the German Empire must shortly perish, since, as he had

[1] To Nicholas Amsdorf, November 7, 1543, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 600, Jer. li. 9.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 477; Erl. ed., $24^2$, p. 16 (in 1520). Here again we find the "she-ass that rebuked the prophet." This enables us to understand his asseveration in the same year ("Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 277; Erl. ed., 27, p. 213), that he was ready to die for his doctrine. Döllinger says of such assurances as the above: "Such a tone of unshaken firmness was in Luther's case largely due to the excitement caused by his polemics . . . and to the sense of his natural superiority" ("Luther, eine Skizze," p. 53; also "Kirchenlexikon," $8^2$, col. 340). He points out that Luther had formed his peculiar views "during a period of painful confusion of mind and trouble of conscience," and that at times when Holy Scripture did not entirely satisfy him he would even seemingly set Christ against Scripture, as in the following passage: "You Papist, you insist much on Scripture, but it is no more than a servant of Christ, and to it I will not listen. But I am strong in Christ, Who is the true Lord and Emperor over Scripture. I care nothing for any texts of Scripture, even though you should bring forward many more against me; for I have the Lord and Master of Scripture on my side," etc. (*ibid.*, p. 59=col. 344).

learnt from Daniel, it was to receive no other constitution. As for the Papacy, at least according to one of the most forcible of his pronouncements, within two years "it would vanish like smoke, together with all its swarm of parasites."

In Daniel viii. we read that a king will come, "of a shameless face, and understanding dark sentences." He will lay all things waste and destroy the mighty and the people of the saints according to his will. "Craft shall be successful in his hands and his heart shall be puffed up. He shall rise up against the prince of princes, and shall be broken without a hand." His coming will be "after many days."[1] The king thus prophesied is generally admitted to have been Antiochus Epiphanes, while the words "after many days" do not refer to the Last Day or to the End of the World, but to the latter end of the Jewish people. Luther, however, took these words and the whole prophecy in an erroneous, apocalyptic sense. He brought the description of the king into connection with the passages on Antichrist, and the great apostasy, in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Second Epistle to Timothy and the Second Epistle of Peter, etc.[2] There seemed to him not the slightest doubt that the Papacy, with its pernicious arrogance and revolt against God, was here described in minutest detail.

This idea he finally elaborated while writing his violent work "On the Babylonish Captivity." He therein promised to tell the Papists things such as they had never heard before. This promise he fulfilled soon after in the detailed reply to Ambrosius Catharinus, which he hastily wrote in the month of March, 1521. In this Latin work he proved in detail to the satisfaction of learned readers, whether in Germany or abroad, that the Papacy was plainly depicted in the Bible as Antichrist, and likewise its approaching great fall.[3]

"I think that, through my exposition of the Prophet Daniel, I have carried out excellently what I promised the Papists to do." Thus to his friend Link, on the completion of the work.[4] Daniel's Antichrist, according to Luther's interpretation,

[1] Daniel viii. 17 ff.

[2] 2 Thess. ii. 3 ff.; 2 Tim. iv. 3 ff.; 2 Peter ii. 1 ff.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 777 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 392 *seq.*, at the end of the "*Responsio ad librum Ambrosii Catharini.*"

[4] "*Id quod hac Danielis explanatione arbitror me præstitisse egregie.*" *Ibid.* Hence what he wrote was intended in all seriousness and in no sense as a joke.

assumes various shapes. These, Luther assures us, are the different forms and masks of Romish superstition and Romish hypocrisy. Amongst these he reckons, as the last, the Universities, because they had made use of the Divine Word in order to deceive the world; here he introduces the prophecy in Apocalypse ix., where a star falls from heaven, the fountains of the deep are opened, locusts with the strength of scorpions rise up out of a thick smoke, and a King reigns over them whose name is Apollyon, or destroyer. The star Luther takes to be Thomas Aquinas, the smoke is the empty words and opinions of Aristotle and the philosophers, the destructive locusts are the Universities, and Apollyon is their master, viz. Aristotle. As for Antichrist himself, i.e. the Papacy, Jesus will destroy him with the breath of His mouth, according to the word of St. Paul, which agrees with the "destruction without hands" prophesied by Daniel. "Thus the Pope and his kingdom are not to be destroyed by laymen, although they greatly dread this [at Rome]; they are not worthy of so mild a chastisement, but are being reserved for the Second Coming of Christ because they have been, and still remain, His most furious enemies. Such is the end of Antichrist, who exalts himself above all things and does not fight with hands, but by the breath and spirit of Satan. Breath shall destroy breath, truth unmask deceit, for the unmasking of a lie means bringing it to nought."[1]

Apocalyptic fancies such as the above were to dog Luther's footsteps for the rest of his life. Both in his writings and in his "Table-Talk" he was never backward in putting forth his views on this abstruse subject.

Of the ideas concerning the Papal Antichrist which, since Hus's time were current among the classes hostile to Rome,[2] Luther selected and absorbed whatever was worst. Hus's work on the Church he read in February, 1520. The birth and growth of the theory in his mind even previous to this can, however, be traced step by step, and the process affords us a valuable insight into his mentality by revealing so well its pseudo-mystical element.

We may distinguish between the earliest private and the earliest public appearance of Luther's idea of the Papal Antichrist. Its first unmistakable private trace is to be met with in a letter of December 11, 1518, to his brother-monk and sympathiser Wenceslaus Link. Luther was at

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 777; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p, 392. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, I, p. 399, and our vol. ii., p. 56 f.

[2] Cp. H. Preuss, "Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist im späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther und in der konfessionellen Polemik," Leipzig, 1906. See our vol. ii., p. 56, n. 1.

that time labouring under the emotion incident on his interrogation at Augsburg, of which he had just published the "*Acta*." Sending a copy to his friend he declares, that his pen is already at work at much greater things, that he knew not whence the ideas that filled his mind came, but that he would send Link whatever writings he published, that he might see "whether I am right in my surmise that the real Antichrist, according to Paul [2 Thess. ii., 3 ff.], rules at the Roman Curia."[1] The first public expression of this idea is, however, to be found in the pronouncement he made subsequent to the Leipzig Disputation in the summer of 1519, viz. that if the Pope arrogated to himself alone the power of interpreting Scripture, then he was exalting himself above God's Word and was worse than Antichrist.[2]

Not long after Luther showed how deeply he had drunk in the ideas of Hus; in February, 1520, he confessed to being a Husite, since both he and Staupitz too had hitherto taught precisely Hus's doctrine, though without having recognised him as their leader; the plain, evangelical truth had been burnt a hundred years before in the person of Hus. "I am so astonished I know not what to think when I contemplate these terrible judgments of God upon men."[3] On March 19 he sent to Spalatin a copy of Hus's writing, which had just been printed for the first time, praising the author as a "marvel of intellect and learning."[4]

In his conception of Antichrist Luther differed from antiquity in that he applied the term not so much to a person as to a system, or a condition of things: the ecclesiastical government of Rome, with its "pretensions" and its "corruption," appears to him in his apocalyptic dreams as the real Antichrist. That he finally came to see in the person of the Pope more and more an embodiment of Antichrist was, however, only to be expected; when one wearer of the Papal tiara died, the mask of Antichrist passed to his successor, a matter of no difficulty since, as the end of the world was nigh, the number of the Popes was in any case complete.

As early as February 24, 1520, having previously found

[1] "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 316.
[2] "*Epitome*" against Prierias, "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 328; "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 79.
[3] To Spalatin, February, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 345.
[4] "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 262; cp. *ibid.*, n. 3.

new fuel for his ire in the perusal of Hutten's edition of Lorenzo Valla's dissertation against the Donation of Constantine, he wrote to Spalatin:[1] "Nothing is too utterly monstrous not to be acceptable at Rome;[2] of the impudent forgery of the Donation they have made a dogma [!]. I have come to such a pass that I can scarcely doubt that the Pope is the real Antichrist whom the world, according to the accepted view, awaits. His life, behaviour, words and laws all fit the character too well. But more of this when we meet." The allusion to the "accepted view" may refer to a work, reprinted at Erfurt in 1516, and which Luther must certainly have known, viz. the "Booklet on the Life and Rule of End-Christ as Divinely decreed, how he corrupteth the world through his false teaching and devilish counsel, and how, after this, the two prophets Enoch and 'Helyas' shall win back Christendom by preaching the Christian faith."

Greater even than the influence of such writings, in confirming him in his persuasion that the Pope was Antichrist, was that of the excitement caused by his polemics. We have already had occasion to speak of his stormy replies to the "*Epitome*" of Silvester Prierias and the controversial pamphlet of Augustine Alveld the Franciscan friar. In the latter rejoinder he promises to handle the Papacy "mercilessly" and to belabour Antichrist as he deserves. "Circumstances demand imperatively that the veil be torn from the mysteries of Antichrist; indeed, in their effrontery they themselves refuse to be any longer shrouded in darkness." Speaking of Prierias, who was a Roman, he says: "I believe that at Rome they have all gone stark, staring mad, and become senseless fools, stocks, stones, devils and a very hell"; "what now can we expect from Rome where such a monster is permitted to take his place in the Church?"[3] In his replies to Prierias and Alveld he depicts Antichrist in the worst colours to be supplied by a vivid imagination and an over-mastering fury: If such things are taught in Rome, then "the veritable Antichrist is indeed seated in the Temple of God, and rules in the purple-clad Babylon at Rome, while the Roman Curia is the synagogue of Satan. . . .

[1] "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 332.
[2] "*Ne quid monstrosissimi monstri desit*," etc.
[3] To Spalatin (previous to June 8), 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 414.

Who can Antichrist be, if not such a Pope? O Satan, Satan, how greatly dost thou abuse the patience of thy Creator to thine own destruction!"[1]

The anger of the sensitive and excitable Wittenberg professor had been roused by contradiction, particularly by the tract which hailed from Rome, but the arrival of the Bull of Excommunication moved him to the very depths of his soul and led him to commit to writing the most hateful travesties of the Roman Papacy.

In the storm and stress of the struggle, which in the latter half of 1520 produced the so-called great Reformation works, the Antichrist theory, in its final form, was made to serve as a bulwark against the Papal excommunication and its consequences. Luther drops all qualifications and henceforth his assertions are positive. The wider becomes the breach separating him from Rome, the blacker must he paint his opponents in order to justify himself before the world and to his own satisfaction. Previous to its publication he summed up the contents of his "An den christlichen Adel" as follows: "There the Pope is severely mauled and treated as Antichrist."[2] As a matter of fact, the comparison is so startling that he could well speak of the booklet as "a trumpet-blast against the world-destroying tyranny of the Roman Antichrist."[3] In the writing "On the Babylonish Captivity," a few weeks later, he exclaims: "Now I know and am certain that the Papacy is the empire of Babylon." "The Popes are Antichrists and desire to be honoured in the stead of Christ. . . . The Papacy is nothing but the empire of Babylon and of the veritable Antichrist, because with its doctrines and laws it merely makes sin more plentiful; hence the Pope is the 'man of sin' and the 'son of destruction.'"[4]

Hereby he had prepared the way for his attack upon Leo the Tenth's Bull of Excommunication, which he published in German and Latin at the end of October, 1520, under the title, "Widder die Bullen des Endchrists" and "*Adversus execrabilem Antichristi bullam.*"[5] Such a name

[1] "*Epitome*" against Prierias, *loc. cit.*
[2] To Spalatin, August 3, 1520, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 456.
[3] To the same, August 5, 1520, *ibid.*, p. 457.
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 498, 537; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 17, 70.
[5] See vol. ii., p. 49. The Latin text appeared a little before the German.

was well calculated to strike the fancy of the masses, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that Luther welcomed it as a taking, popular cry.

It is easy to meet the objection that the Papal Antichrist was nothing more to Luther than a serviceable catchword, and that he never meant it seriously. That such was not the case we have abundantly proved already; on the contrary, we have here a clear outgrowth of his pseudo-mysticism. He ever preserved it as a sacred possession, and it found its way in due season into the Schmalkald Articles[1] and into the Notes Luther appended to his German Bible.[2] The idea, which never left him, of the world's approaching end—with this we shall deal at greater length in vol. v., xxxi. 2—is without a doubt closely linked with his cherished theory of his being the revealer of Antichrist and the chosen instrument of God for averting His malice in the latter days.

The Bible assures us, according to Luther, that, "after the downfall of the Pope and the delivery of the poor, no one on earth would be feared as a tyrant" (Psalm x. 18); now, he continues, "this would not be possible were the world to continue after the Pope's fall, for the world cannot exist without tyrants. And thus the prophet agrees with the Apostle that Christ at His coming [i.e. His second coming, for the Last Judgment] will upset the holy Roman Chair. God grant this happen speedily. Amen."[3]

In 1541, Luther wrote a Latin essay on the Chronology of the World, which, in 1550, was published in German by Johann Aurifaber under the title of "Luthers Chronica." This work, which witnesses both to Luther's industry and to his interest in history, is also made to serve its author's views on Antichrist. Towards the end, alluding to what he had already said concerning the several periods of the world's history, he adds, that it was "to be hoped that the end of the world was drawing near, for the sixth millenary of its history would not be completed, any more than the three days between Christ's death and resurrection." Besides, "at no other time had greater and more numerous signs taken place, which gives us a certain hope that the Last Day is at the very door."[4] Of the year A.D. 1000 we here read: "The Roman

[1] "Symbolische Bücher,[10]" pp. 308, 324, 337, and in particular p. 336, No. 39.

[2] In the so-called "Lufft Bible," Luther applies Daniel xii. to the Papal Antichrist. Kawerau, "Theol. Literaturztng.," 1884, p. 269.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 719; Erl. ed., $24^2$, p. 203, at the beginning of the work "*Bulla Cœnæ Domini*" of 1522. See other references in Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, pp. 646, 696; *ibid.*, 2, pp. 156, 283, 529, 586.

[4] "Werke," Walch's ed., 14, p. 1278.

Bishop becometh Antichrist, thanks to the power of the sword."[1]

In the same year his tireless pen, amongst other writings, produced a Commentary on Daniel xii. concerning the "end of the days," the abomination of desolation and the general retribution. The Papal Antichrist here again supplies him with abundant exemplifications of the fulfilment of the prophecy; the signs foretold to herald the destruction of this Empire, so hostile to God, had almost all been accomplished, and the great day was at hand.

Other people, and, among them some of the great lights of Catholicism, both before and after Luther's day, have erred in their exegesis of Antichrist and been led to expect prematurely the end of the world. Yet only in Luther do we find united a fanatical expectation of the end with a minute acquaintance with its every detail, scriptural demonstrations with anxious observation of the events of the times, all steeped in the deadliest hatred of that mortal enemy the Papacy.

His conviction that God was proving his mission by signs and wonders sometimes assumed unfortunate forms, for instance, when he superstitiously seeks its attestation in incidents of his own day.

We see an example of this in the meaning he attached to the huge whale driven ashore near Haarlem, in which he saw a sign of God's wrath against the Papists. "The Lord has given them an ominous sign," he writes, on June 13, 1522, to Speratus, "if so be they enter into themselves and do penance. For He has cast a sea monster called a whale, 70 feet in length and 35 feet in girth, on the shore near Haarlem. Such a monster it is usual to regard as a certain sign of wrath. May God have mercy on them and on us."[2] Other natural phenomena, amongst them an earthquake in Spain, led him to write as follows to Spalatin at the beginning of the following year: "Don't think that I shall creep back into a corner however much Behemoth and his crew may rage. New and awful portents occur day by day, and you have doubtless heard of the earthquake in Spain."[3]

When, in 1536, extraordinary deeds were narrated of a girl at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, and attributed to demoniacal possession (she could, for instance, produce coins from all sorts of impossible places, even out of men's beards), Luther, we are told, utilised in the pulpit these terrible signs and portents, "as a warning to abandoned persons who deem themselves secure, in order that now, at last, they may begin to fear God and to put their trust in Him."[4]

[1] "Werke," Walch's ed., 14, p. 1265 f.
[2] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 397.
[3] January 12, 1523, *ibid.*, 4, p. 62.
[4] Cp. "Analecta Lutherana," ed. Kolde, p. 242, and the notes of Enders (in "Luthers Briefwechsel," 11, p. 18) on the letter of the Frankfurt preacher Andreas Ebert to Luther, dealing with these phenomena. See also N. Paulus, "Lit. Beilage" to the "Köln. Volksztng.," 1908, No. 30.

At Freiberg in Saxony, towards the end of 1522, a cow was delivered of a deformed calf. On this becoming known, people, as was then the vogue, set about discovering the meaning of the portent. An astrologer of Prague first took the extraordinary phenomenon to refer to Luther, whose hateful and wicked behaviour was portrayed in the miscarriage. Luther, on the other hand, discovered that the monstrosity really represented a naked calf clothed in a cowl (the skin was drawn up into strange creases on the back), and that it therefore indicated the monkish state, of the worthlessness of which it was a true picture, and God's wrath against monasticism. In a tract published in the spring, 1523, he compared in such detail and with such wealth of fancy the creature to the monks that the work itself was termed monstrous.[1] The cowl represented the monkish worship, "with prayers, Masses, chanting and fasting," which they perform to the calf, i.e. "to the false idol in their lying hearts"; just as the calf eats nothing but grass, so "they fatten on sensual enjoyments here on earth." "The cowl over the hind-quarters of the calf is torn," this signifies the monks' "impurity"; the calf's legs are "their impudent Doctors" and pillars; the calf assumes the attitude of a preacher, which means that their preaching is despicable; it is also blind because they are blind; it has ears, and these signify the abuse of the confessional; with the horns with which it is provided it shall break down their power; the tightening of the cowl around its neck signifies their obstinacy, etc. A woodcut of the calf helped the reader to understand the mysteries better. To show that he meant it all in deadly earnest, he adduced texts from Scripture which might prove how "well-grounded" was his interpretation. He declares, that he only speaks of what he is quite sure, and that he refrains from a further, i.e. a prophetic, interpretation of the "Monk-Calf" because it was not sufficiently certain, although "God gives us to understand by these portents that some great misfortune and change is imminent." His hope is that this change might be the coming of the Last Day, "since many signs have so far coincided." Hence his

[1] "Deuttung der czwo grewlichen Figuren Bapstesels czu Rom und Munchkalbs zu Freyberg funden. Philippus Melanchthon. Doctor Martinus Luther." Wittenberg, 1523. "Werke," Weim. ed., 11 p. 369 ff.; Erl. ed., 29, p. 2 ff.

strange delusion concerning the calf goes hand in hand with his habitual one concerning the approaching end of the world.

It would be to misapprehend the whole character of the writing to assert, as has recently been done by an historian of Luther, that the author was merely joking, and that what he says of the Monk-Calf was simply a jest at the expense of the Pope and the monks. As a matter of fact, every line of the work protests against such a misrepresentation of the author and his prophetic mysticism, and no one can read the pamphlet without being struck by the entire seriousness which it breathes.

The tragic earnestness of the whole is evident in the very first pages, where Luther allows a friend to give his own interpretation of a similar abortion (the Pope-Ass) born in Italy. Here the writer is no other than the learned Humanist Melanchthon, who, like Luther, with the help of a wood-cut, describes and explains the portent. Pope-Ass and Monk-Calf made the round of Germany together, in successive editions. Melanchthon, scholar though he was, is not one whit less earnest in the significance he attaches to the "Pope-Ass found dead in 1496 in the Tiber at Rome."

After this double work, so little to the credit of German literature, had frequently been reprinted, Luther, in 1535, added two additional pages to Melanchthon's text with a corroboration entitled: "Dr. Martin Luther's Amen to the interpretation of the Pope-Ass." He here accepts entirely Melanchthon's exposition, which was more than the latter was willing to do for Luther's interpretation of the Monk-Calf. Melanchthon's opinion, for which perhaps more might be said, was that the misshapen calf stood for the corruption of the Lutheran teaching by sensuality and perverse doctrine, iconoclast violence and revolutionary peasant movements.[1]

In his "Amen" to Melanchthon's Pope-Ass, Luther writes: "The Sublime, Divine Wisdom Itself" "created this hideous, shocking and horrible image." "Well may the whole world be affrighted and tremble." "People are terrified if a spirit or devil appears, or makes a clatter in a corner, though this is but mere child's play compared with such an abomination, wherein God manifests Himself

[1] To Camerarius, April 16, 1525. "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 738.

openly and shows Himself so cruel. Great indeed is the wrath which must be impending over the Papacy."[1]

In his Church-postils Luther spoke of the "Pope-Ass" with an earnestness calculated to make a profound impression upon the susceptible. He referred to the "dreadful beast which the Tiber had cast up at Rome some years before, with an ass's head, a body like a woman's, an elephant's foot for a right hand, with fish scales on its legs, and a dragon's head at its rear, etc. All this signified the Papacy and the great wrath and chastisement of God. Signs in such number portend something greater than our reason can conceive."[2]

As Luther makes such frequent use of the Pope-Ass, which he was instrumental in immortalising, for instance, in the frightful abuse of the Pope contained in "Das Bapstum zu Rom vom Teuffel gestifft,"[3] and also circulated a woodcut of it in his book of caricatures of the Papacy, adding some derisive verses,[4] which woodcut was afterwards reproduced from this or the earlier publication by other opponents of the Papacy, both in Germany and abroad,[5] some particulars concerning the previous history of the Pope-Ass may here not be out of place.

The dead beast was said to have been left stranded on the banks of the Tiber in January, 1496, under the pontificate of Pope Alexander VI., when Italy was in a state of great distress. The find made a profound impression, as was only to be expected in those days of excitement and superstition; it was greatly exaggerated, and, at an early date, interpreted in various ways.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 29, p. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, $10^2$, p. 65.

[3] "Oh, dear little Pope-Ass, don't try to lick . . . for you might fall and break a leg or do something else, and then all the world would laugh at you and say: For shame, look what a mess the Pope-Ass has got itself into." "You are a rude ass, you Pope-Ass, and that you will ever remain." "When I [the Pope-Ass] bray, hee-haw, hee-haw, or relieve myself in the way of nature, they must take it all as articles of faith . . . but all is sealed with devil's ordure—in the Decretals—and written in the Pope-Ass's dung" ("Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, pp. 148 *seq.*, 169). One word, used in this connection, and spelt by Luther "Fartz," he employs in endless variations. Pope Paul III. he calls "Eselfartz-Bapst," "Bapst Fartzesel," "Fartzesel-Bapst" and "Eselbapstfartz." "We see," remarks Conrad Lange, "how the apparition of the Roman monstrosity continued to act upon his imagination, and how, even at the close of his life, it still appeared to him suited to excite the masses in the religious struggle." "Der Papstesel, ein Beitrag zur Kultur- und Kunstgesch. des Reformationszeitalters." With four illustrations, Göttingen, 1891, p. 88.

[4] "Abbildung des Bapstum," by Martin Luther, 1545. The verses run as follows:

"Was Gott selbs von dem Bapstum helt,
Zeigt dis schrecklich Bild hie gestellt.
Dafur jederman grawen solt,
Wenn ers zu Hertzen nemen wolt."

[5] Cp. Lange, *ibid.*, p. 92 ff.

The oldest description is to be met with in the Venetian Annals of Malipiero, where the account is that given by the ambassador of the Republic at Rome.[1] The monster was also portrayed in stone in the Cathedral of Como, as an omen, so it would seem, of the misfortunes of the day, and of those yet to be expected.[2] At Rome itself political opponents of Alexander VI. made use of it in their campaign against a Pope they hated, by circulating a lampoon—the oldest extant—containing a caricature of the event. A facsimile of this cut has come down to us in the shape of a copper plate made in 1498 by Wenzel of Olmütz.[3] In all likelihood a copy of this very plate was sent to Luther at the beginning of 1523 by the Bohemian Brethren.

Melanchthon and Luther diverged in their use of this picture from the older and more harmless interpretation, i.e. that which saw in it a reference to earthly trials, or a judgment on the politics of the Pope. They, on the contrary, regarded it as a denunciation by heaven of the Papacy itself and of the Roman Church with all its "abominations." Quite possibly the transition had been quietly effected by the Bohemian Brethren. Luther, however, says Lange, "was the first to make it public property." "The Pope-Ass is for this reason the most interesting example of the whole teratological literature, because in it we can see the transition visibly effected." The same author detects in the joint work of the two Wittenbergers "a polemical tone hitherto unheard of"; of Melanchthon's Pope-Ass, he says: "It is probably the most unworthy work we have of Melanchthon's. He himself naturally believed implicitly in what he wrote. . . . That Melanchthon acquitted himself of his task with particular skill cannot be affirmed."[4]

Just as the Monk-Calf had been applied to Luther himself previous to his own polemical interpretation of it, so, after the appearance of his and Melanchthon's joint publication, both the Calf and the Ass were repeatedly taken by the Catholic controversialists to represent Luther and his innovations. The sixteenth century, as already hinted, loved to dwell upon and expound such freaks of nature. Authors of repute had done so before Luther, at least to the extent of making such the subject of indifferent compositions, as the poet J. Franciscus Vitalis of Palermo had done ("*De monstro nato*") in the case of a monstrosity said to have been born at Ravenna in 1511 or 1512; the Humanist Jacob Locher, at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, dealt with a similar case in his "*Carmen heroicum.*" Conrad Lycosthenes published at Basle, in 1557, a compendium of the prodigies of nature ("*Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon*"), in which he instances a large number of such freaks famous even before Luther's day. Of the earlier Humanists Sebastian Brant composed some Elegies on the Marvels of Nature. The Wittenberg work on the Calf and Ass must be put in its

[1] "Annali Veneti" ("Archivio storico italiano," 7, p. 422). Lange, *ibid.*, p. 18.
[2] Picture in Lange, *ibid.*, plate 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, plate 1.
[4] P. 84 *seq.*

proper setting, and judged according to the standard of its age; although, owing to its religious bias, it far exceeds in extravagance anything that had appeared so far, it nevertheless was an outgrowth of its time.

### 3. Proofs of the Divine Mission. Miracles and Prophecies

How was Luther to give actual proof of the reality of his call and of his mission to introduce such far-reaching ecclesiastical innovations?

Luther himself, indirectly, invited his hearers to ask this question concerning his calling. "Whoever teaches anything new or strange" must be "called to the office of preacher" he frequently declares of those new doctrines which differed from his own; no one who has not a legitimate mission will be able to withstand the devil, but on the contrary will be cast down to hell.[1] Even in the case of the ordinary and regular office, Luther demands a legitimate mission; for the office of extraordinary messenger of God, he is still more severe. For here it is a question of the extraordinary preaching of truths previously unknown or universally forgotten or questioned, and of the reintroduction of doctrine. Here he rightly requires that whoever wishes to introduce anything new or to teach something different from the common, must be able to appeal to miracles in support of his vocation. If he is unable to do this, let him pack up and depart.[2] Elsewhere, as he correctly puts it: "Where God wills to alter the ordinary ways, He ever performs miracles."[3] (Cp. vol. i., p. 225 f.)

His teaching is, "There are two sorts of vocations to the office of preacher"; one takes place without any human means by God alone [the extraordinary call], the other [the ordinary] is effected by man as well as by God. The first is not to be credited unless attested by miracles such as were performed by Christ and His Apostles. Hence, if they come and say God has called them, that the Holy Ghost urges them, and they are forced to preach, let us ask them boldly:

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 20, p. 724: "*In malam rem abeat.*" Cp. in general the Wittenberg sermons against Carlstadt and the fanatics which appeared under the title "Acht Sermone," "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 1 ff.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 202 ff.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 20, p. 724.

[3] To the Council and congregation of Mühlhausen, August 21, 1524, "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 240; Erl. ed., 53, p. 255 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 377).

"What signs do you perform that we may believe you?"[1] (Mark xvi. 20). Logically enough Luther also demanded miracles of Carlstadt, Münzer and the Anabaptists.

Which of the two kinds of vocation must we see in Luther's case? Was his the ordinary one, which keeps to the well-trodden path, or the extraordinary one, which "strikes out a new way"? Simple as the question appears, it is nevertheless difficult to give a straight answer in Luther's own words.

As has been proved by Döllinger in his work on the Reformation, and as was well seen even by earlier polemical writers, Luther's statements concerning his own mission were not remarkable for consistency. No less than fourteen variations have been counted, though, naturally, they do not involve as many changes of opinion.[2] We shall be nearest to the truth if we assume his mission to have been an extraordinary and unusual one. As an ordinary one it certainly could not be regarded, seeing the novelty of his teaching, and that he himself, as "Evangelist by God's Grace" (see vol. iv., xxvi., 4), professed to be introducing a doctrine long misunderstood and forgotten. Besides, an ordinary call could only have emanated from the actually existing ecclesiastical authorities, with whom Luther had altogether broken. In this connection Luther himself, on one occasion, comes surprisingly near the Catholic view concerning the right of call invested in the bishops as the successors of the Apostles, and declares that "not for a hundred thousand worlds would he interfere with the office of a bishop without a special command."[3]

The assumption of an extraordinary call offers, however, an insuperable difficulty which cannot fail to present itself after what has been said. No extraordinary attestation on the part of heaven is forthcoming, nor any miracle which might have confirmed Luther's doctrine; God's witness on behalf of His messenger by signs or prophecies, such as those of Christ, of the Apostles and of many of the Saints, was lacking in Luther's case, and so was that sanctity of life to be expected of a divinely commissioned teacher whose mission it is to bring men to the truth.

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $15^2$, p. 5.

[2] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 205 ff.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 28, p. 248; Erl ed., 50, p. 292, in the exposition of John xviii.

No one now believes in the existence of any actual and authentic miracle performed by Luther, or in any real prophecy, whether about or by him. With the tales of miracles which once found favour among credulous Pietists, history has no concern. Though here and there some credence still attaches to the alleged prediction of Hus, which Luther himself appealed to,[1] viz. that after the goose (Hus=goose) would come a swan, yet historical criticism has already dealt quite sufficiently with it. We should run the risk of exposing Luther to ridicule were we to enumerate and reduce to their real value the alleged miracles by which, for instance, he was convinced his life was preserved in the poisoned pulpits of the Papists, or the various "*monstra*" and "*portenta*" which accompanied his preaching. Of such prodigies the Pope-Ass and the Monk-Calf are fair samples (above, p. 148 ff.).[2]

In reply to the attempts made, more particularly in the days of Protestant orthodoxy in the sixteenth century, to compare the rapid spread of Protestantism with the miracle of the rapid propagation of Christianity in early days, it has rightly been pointed out, that the comparison is a lame one; the Church of Christ spread because her moral power enabled her to impose on a proud world mysteries which transcend all human reason; on a world sunk in every lust and vice a moral law demanding a continual struggle against all the passions and desires of the heart; her conquest of the world was achieved without secular aid or support, in fact, in the very teeth of the great ones of the earth who for ages persecuted her; yet during this struggle she laid her foundations in the unity of the one faith and one hierarchy; her spread, then, was truly miraculous.

Luther, on the other hand, so his opponents urged, by his opposition to ecclesiastical authority and his principle of the free interpretation of Scripture, was casting humility to the winds and setting up the individual as the highest authority in matters of religion; thanks to his "evangelical freedom" he felt justified in deriding as holiness-by-works much that in Christianity was a burden or troublesome; on the other hand, by his doctrine of imputation, he cast the mantle of

[1] Cp., for instance, "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 387; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 87. "Auff das vermeint Keiserlich Edict."

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 369 ff.; Erl. ed., 29, p. 2 ff.

Christ's righteousness over all the doings and omissions of believers; from the very birth of his movement he had sought his principal support in the favour of the Princes, whom, in due course, he invested with supreme authority in the Church; the spread of Lutheranism was not the spread of a united Church, but, on the contrary, such was the diversity of opinions that Jacob Andreæ, a Protestant preacher, could say, in 1576, in a public address, that it would be difficult to find a pastor who held the same faith as his sexton.[1] From all this the Church's sixteenth-century apologists concluded that the spread of Luther's teaching was not at all miraculous.

Concerning the miracle spoken of above, and miracles in general as proofs of the truth, Luther expresses himself in the third sermon on the Ascension, embodied in his Church-postils. The occasion was furnished by the words of Our Lord: "These signs shall follow those who believe" (Mark xvi. 17), and by the pertinent question addressed to him by the fanatics and other opponents: Where are your miracles?

With remarkable assurance he will have it, that to put such a question to him was quite "idle"; miracles enough had taken place when Christianity was first preached to make good the words spoken by Our Lord; at the present day the Gospel had no further need of them: such outward signs had been suitable "for the heathen," whereas, now, the Gospel had been "proclaimed everywhere."—He does not see that though the Gospel had certainly been proclaimed everywhere this was was not his own particular Gospel or Evangel, and that he is therefore begging the question. He continues quite undismayed: Miracles may nevertheless take place, and do, as a matter of fact, occur under the Evangel, for instance, the driving out of devils and the healing of sicknesses. "The best and greatest miracle" is, however, the spread and preservation of my doctrine in spite of the assaults of devils, tyrants and fanatics, in spite of flesh and blood, of the "Pope, the Turk and his myrmidons." Is it no miracle, that "so many die cheerfully in Christ" in this faith? Compared with this miracle, declares the orator, those miracles which appeal to the senses are mere child's play; this is a "miracle beyond all miracles"; well might people be astonished at the survival of his doctrine "when a hundred thousand devils were striving against it." It was only to be expected that this miracle should be blasphemed by an unbelieving world, but "were we to perform the most palpable miracles, they would still despise them." This is why God does not work them through us, just as Christ Himself, although able to perform miracles with the greatest ease, once refused to give the Jews

[1] I. Andreæ, "*Oratio de studio sacr. litt. in acad. Lipsiensi recitata*," Tübing., 1577, c. 2.

" any other sign than that of the Prophet Jonas," i.e. the resurrection. Luther concludes with an explanation of Christ's refusal and of the miracle of Jonas.[1]

Hence he is willing to allow the absence of " palpable miracles " in support of his Evangel, in default of which, however, he instances the miracle of his great success. And yet, according to his own showing, such an attestation by palpable miracles would have been eminently desirable. Germany, he says, from the early days of her conversion down to his own time, had never been in possession of Christianity, because the real Gospel, i.e. the doctrine of Justification, had remained unknown. Only now for the first time had the Gospel been revealed in all its purity, thanks to his study of Scripture.[2] At the Council of Nicæa he declares, " there was not one who had even tasted of the Divine Spirit " ; even the Council of the Apostles at Jerusalem was not above suspicion, seeing that it had seen fit to discuss works and traditions rather than faith.[3]

Thus he requires that his unheard-of claims, albeit not attested by any display of miracles, should be accepted simply on his own assurance that his teaching was based on Holy Scripture. " There is no need for us to work wonders, for our teaching is already confirmed [by Holy Scripture] and is no new thing."[4]

Owing to the lack of any Divine attestation, Luther often preferred to describe his mission as an ordinary one. In this case he derives his vocation to teach from his degree of Doctor of Theology and from the authority given him by the authorities to preach. " I, Dr. Martin," he says, for instance, speaking of his doctorate, " was called and compelled thereto ; for I was forced to become a Doctor

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 12, p. 218–221. Cp. Erl. ed., $12^2$, p. 235–238 ; Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 145.

[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 39 ; Erl. ed., 22, p. 184 : " All the world is astonished and is obliged to confess that we have the Gospel almost as pure and unchanged as in the time of the Apostles, in fact, in its primitive purity."

[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 105 ff. ; Erl. ed., 28, p. 141 ff. Cp. *ibid.*, 15, p. 39 ff. = 22, pp. 184, 186 ; 8, p. 117 = 27, p. 331 ; 15, p. 584 ff. = 19, p. 186 ff. " Hence it is plain that the Councils are uncertain and not to be counted on. For not one was so pure that it did not add to or take away from the faith. . . . The Council of the Apostles, though the first and purest, left something to be desired, though it did no harm."

[4] " Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 36 ; Erl. ed., 35, p. 61.

[of Holy Scripture] against my will and simply out of obedience."[1] Elsewhere, however, he declares that the doctorate was by no means sufficient to enable one to bid defiance to the devil, or to equip a man in conscience for the task of preaching.[2] He was still further confirmed in this belief when he realised that he owed his doctorate to that very Church which he represented as the Kingdom of Antichrist and a mere Babylon. He himself stigmatised his degree as the "mark of the Beast," and rejoiced that the excommunication had cancelled this papistical title.

Neither could the want of a call be supplied by the authorisation of the Wittenberg Council, upon which at times Luther was wont to lay stress. He himself hesitated to allow that magistrates or Princes could give a call, particularly where the teaching of any of those thus appointed by the magistrates ran counter to his own. Even though their teaching agreed entirely with the views of the secular authorities, their mission was in his eyes quite invalid. He even had frequent cause to complain, that the Evangel was greatly hampered by the interference of the secular authorities and by their sending out as preachers those who had no real call, and were utterly unfitted for the office.

After what has gone before, we can readily understand how Luther came to pass over in silence the question of his mission and to appeal directly to his preaching of the truth as the sign of his vocation; he does not seem to have perceived that the main point was to establish a criterion for the recognition of the truth, short of which anyone would be at liberty to set up his pet error as the "truth." "The first," though not the only condition, was, he declared, "that the preacher should have an office, be convinced that he was called and sent, and that what he did was done for the sake of his office"; seeing, however, that even the Papists fulfilled these conditions, Luther usually required

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 386=25², p. 87.

[2] Cp. *ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 105 *seq.*=28, p. 143. Cp. *ibid.*, 28, p. 248=50, p. 292: "Because I am a doctor of Holy Scripture I have a right to do so [even to interfere in the office of the bishops]; for I have sworn to teach the truth." Continuation of the passage quoted above, p. 154, n. 3. Thomas Münzer he reproaches with having no call. Of the necessity of a call he says: "If things went ill in my house and my next-door neighbour were to break in and claim a right to settle matters, surely I should have something to say."

in addition that the preachers "be certain they have God's Word on their side."[1]

In 1522 he declared any questioning of his vocation to be mere perversity, for, of his call, no creature had a right to judge. We cannot but quote again this assurance, "My doctrine is not to be judged by any man, nor even by the angels; because I am certain of it, I will judge you and the angels likewise, as St. Paul says (Gal. i. 8), and whosoever does not accept my teaching will not arrive at blessedness. For it is God's and not mine, therefore my judgment is God's and not mine."[2]

Such statements are aids to the understanding of his mode of thought, but there are other traits in his mental history relating to the confirmation of his Divine calling.

Such, for instance, is his account of the miracles by which the flight of certain nuns from their convents was happily accomplished.

The miracle which was wrought on behalf of the nun Florentina, and in confirmation of the new Evangel, is famous. Luther himself, in March, 1524, published the story according to the account given by the nun herself, and dedicated it to Count Mansfeld.[3] As this circumstance, and also the Preface, shows, he took the matter very seriously, and was entirely persuaded that it was a visible "sign from heaven." Yet it is perfectly plain, even from his own pamphlet, that the occurrence was quite simple and natural.

Florentina of Upper-Weimar had been confided in early childhood to the convent of Neu-Helfta, at Eisleben, to be educated; later, after the regulation "year of probation," she took the vows, probably without any real vocation. Having become acquainted with some of the writings of the Reformers, she entered into correspondence with Luther, and, one happy day in February, 1524, thanks to "visible, Divine assistance," escaped from her fellow-nuns—who, so she alleged, had treated her cruelly—because, as she very naively remarks,[4] "the person who should have locked me in left the cells open." She betook herself to Luther at Wittenberg. Luther adds nothing to the bare facts; he has no wish to deceive the reader by false statements. Yet, speaking of the incident, he says in the Introduction: "God's Word and Work must be acknowledged with fear, nor

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 48, p. 139 f.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 107; Erl. ed., 28, p. 144, at the commencement of the work "Wyder den falsch genantten geystlichen Standt."

[3] *Ibid.*, 15, p. 86 *seq.* = 29, p. 103 ff.: "Eyn Geschicht wie Got eyner Erbarn Kloster Jungfrawē ausgelffen hat."

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 93=112.

. . . may His signs and wonders be cast to the winds." Godless people despised God's works and said: This the devil must have done. They did not "perceive God's action, or recognise the work of His Hands. So is it ever with God's miracles." Just as the Pharisees disregarded Christ's driving out of devils and raising of the dead, and only admitted those things to be miracles which they chose to regard as such, so it is still to-day. Hence no heed would be paid to this work of God by which Florentina "had been so miraculously rescued from the jaws of the devil." If noisy spirits, or Papists with their holy water, performed something extraordinary, then, of course, that was a real miracle. He proceeds: "But we who, by God's Grace, have come to the knowledge of the Evangel and the truth, are not at liberty to allow such signs, which take place for the corroboration of the Evangel, to pass unnoticed. What matters it that those who neither know, nor desire to know, the Evangel do not recognise it as a sign, or even take it for the devil's work?"[1]

The use of an argument so puerile, and Luther's confident assumption of an extraordinary interference of Divine Omnipotence suspending the laws of nature (which is what a miracle amounts to), all this could only arouse painful surprise in the minds of those of his readers who were faithful to the Church. Luther was here the victim of a mystical delusion only to be accounted for by his dominant idea of his relation to God and the Church.

When, in the same work, he goes on to tell his readers that: "God has certainly wrought many similar signs during the last three years, which shall be described in due season"; or that he merely recounted Florentina's escape to Count Mansfeld as "a special warning from God" against the nunneries, which "God had made manifest in their own country," we see still more plainly the extent and depth of his pseudo-mystical views concerning the miracles wrought on behalf of his Evangel.

Concerning his own ability to work miracles, he is reticent and cautious. It is true that, to those who are ready to believe in him, he confidently promises God's wonderful intervention should the need arise; the miraculous power, so far as it concerns himself, he represents, however, as bound by a wise economy, and, also, by his own desire of working merely through the Word.

It should be noted of the statements to be quoted that they betray no trace of having been made in a jesting or rhetorical mood, but are, on the contrary, in the nature of theological arguments.

In 1537, he declared: "I have frequently said that I never desired God to grant me the grace of working miracles, but

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 87=104.

rejoice that it is given to me to hold fast to the Word of God and to work with it; otherwise they would soon be saying: 'The devil works through him.'" For, as the Jews behaved towards Christ, "so also do our adversaries, the Papists, behave towards us. Whatever we do is wrong in their eyes; they are annoyed at us and scandalised and say: The devil made this people. But they shall have no sign from us." All that Christ said to the Jews was: "Destroy this temple," that is, Me and My teaching; I shall nevertheless rise again. "What else can we reply to our foes, the Papists? . . . Destroy the temple if you will, it shall nevertheless be raised up again in order that the Gospel may remain in the Christian Church."[1]—The great miracle required of Christ was merely deferred, He performed it by His actual resurrection from the dead. What sign such as this was it in Luther's power to promise?

Luther is even anxious not to have any signs. "I have besought the contrary of God," i.e. that there should be no revelations or signs, so he writes in 1534, in the enlarged Commentary on Isaias, "in order that I may not be lifted up, or drawn away from the spoken Word, by the deceit of Satan."[2]—"Now that the Gospel has been spread abroad and proclaimed to the whole world it is not necessary to work wonders as in the time of the Apostles. But should necessity arise and the Gospel be threatened and suffer violence, we should then have to set about it and work signs rather than leave the Gospel to be abused and oppressed. But I hope it will not be necessary, and that things will not come to such a pass as to compel me to speak with new tongues, for this is not really necessary." Here he is thinking of believers generally, though at the close he refers more particularly to himself. Speaking of all, he continues prudently: "Let no one take it upon himself to work wonders without urgent necessity." "For the disciples did not perform them on every occasion, but only in order to bear witness to the Word and to confirm it by miraculous signs."[3]

That he believed the power to work miracles might be obtained of God may be inferred from many of his declarations against the fanatics, where he challenges them to prove themselves the messengers of God by signs and wonders; for whosoever is desirous of teaching something new or uncommon, he had said, must be "called by God and able to confirm his calling by real miracles," otherwise let him pack up and go his way.[4] But his own doctrines were an entirely new thing in the Church, and, in spite of every subterfuge, when thus inviting others to perform miracles, he cannot always have been unmindful of the fact. Hence it has been said that he claimed a certain latent ability to work miracles. It should, however, be noted that he always

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 46, p. 205 ff.
[2] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 25, p. 120.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 145 f.; Erl. ed., $12^2$, p. 201, in the Church-postils.
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 20, p. 724. See above, p. 153.

insists here that his teaching, unlike that of the fanatics and other sects, Catholics included, was not new, but was the original teaching of Christ, and that therefore it stood in no need of miracles.

Still, his confident tone brings him within measurable distance of volunteering to work miracles in support of his cause. "Although I have wrought no such sign such as perhaps we might work, should necessity arise," etc.[1] These words are quite in keeping with the above: "We should have to set about it," etc.

It is strange how Luther repeatedly falls back on Melanchthon's recovery at Weimar in 1540. This eventually followed a visit of Luther to his friend, to encourage and pray for the sick man, whose health had completely broken down under the influence of melancholy.[2] It is possible Luther saw in this a miraculous answer to his prayer; owing to the manner in which he recounted the incident it became a tradition, that the power of his prayer was stronger than the toils of death. Walch, in his Life of Luther, wrote, that people had then seen "how much Luther's prayer was capable of."[3]

The same scholar adds, as another "remarkable example," that that godly and upright man, Frederick Myconius, the first evangelical Superintendent at Gotha, had assured him before his death, that only thanks to Luther's prayers had he been able to drag on his existence, notwithstanding his consumption, for six years, though in a state of "great weakness."[4] In cheering up Myconius, and promising him his prayers, Luther had said: As to your recovery, "I demand it, I will it, and my will be done. Amen."[5] "In the same way," Walch tells us, "he also prayed for his wife Catharine when she was very ill; he was likewise reported to have said on one occasion: 'I rescued our Philip, my Katey and Mr. Myconius from death by my prayers.'"[6]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 12; Erl. ed., 28, p. 288. "Von beider Gestallt des Sacramentes," 1522.

[2] See vol. iv., xxi. 2, towards the end.

[3] "Ausführliche Nachricht von M. Luthero," in his edition of Luther, 24, p. 357.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 359 f.

[5] To Myconius, January 9, 1541, "Briefe," 5, p. 327.

[6] P. 361, where he quotes Mathesius's Sermons on Luther, 13, p. 148 (Nuremberg edition, 1566, p. 157). Cp. "Briefwechsel," 13, p. 11, and what Weller says (vol. vi., xxxviii. 2) of the two dead people raised to life by Luther. In the German "Table-Talk" ("Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 3) Luther says of prayer: "The prayer of the Church performs great miracles. In our own time it has restored three dead men to life; first me, for often I was sick unto death, then my housekeeper Katey, who was also sick unto death, finally Philip Melanchthon, who, anno 1540, lay sick unto death at Weimar. Though *Liberatio a morbis et corporalibus periculis* is not the best of miracles, yet it must not be allowed to pass unheeded *propter infirmitatem in fide*. To me it is a much greater miracle that God Almighty should every day bestow the grace of baptism, give Himself in the Sacrament of the altar and absolve *et liberat a peccato, a morte et damnatione æterna*. These are great miracles." Cp. Förstemann's notes, "Tischreden," 2, p. 230.

How does the case stand as regards the gift of prophecy, seeing that Luther apparently claims to have repeatedly made use of higher prophetic powers ?

On more than one occasion Luther declares that what he predicted usually came to pass, even adding, "This is no joke." In the same way he often says quite seriously, that he would refrain from predicting this or that misfortune lest his words should be fulfilled. We see an instance of this sort in his circular-letter addressed, in February, 1539, to the preachers on the anticipated religious war.[1]

"I am a prophet of evil and do not willingly prophesy anything, for it generally comes to pass." This he says in conversation when speaking of the wickedness of Duke George of Saxony.[2] In the Preface to John Sutel's work on "The Gospel of the Destruction of Jerusalem," Luther says, in 1539, speaking of the disasters which were about to befall Germany : "I do not like prophesying and have no intention of doing so, for what I prophesy, more particularly the evil, is as a rule fulfilled, even beyond my expectations, so that, like St. Micheas, I often wish I were a liar and false prophet ; for since it is the Word of God that I speak it must needs come to pass."[3] In his Church-postils he commences a gloomy prophecy on the impending fate of Germany with the words : "From the bottom of my heart I am loath to prophesy, for I have frequently experienced that what I predict comes only too true," the circumstances, however, compelled him, etc.[4]

No wonder then that his enthusiastic disciples had many instances to relate of his "prophecies."

A casual reference of Luther's to a seditious rising to be expected among the German nobility, is labelled in the MS. copy of Lauterbach's "Tagebuch," "Luther's Prophecy concerning the rising of the German nobles."[5] Bucer in his Eulogies on Luther in the old Strasburg Agenda, after mentioning his great gifts, says : "Add also the gift of prophecy, for everything happens just as he foretold it." This we read in a Leipzig publication,[6] in which, as an echo of the Reformation Festivities of 1717, a Lutheran, referring to the General Superintendent of Altenburg, Eckhard, protests, "that Luther both claimed and really possessed the gift of prophecy." Mathesius, in his 15th Sermon on Luther, speaks enthusiastically of the latter's prophecy against those of the new faith who were sapping the foundations of the

[1] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 169.

[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 324, and *ibid.*, quotation from Rebenstock's Latin Colloquies. Seidemann in Lauterbach's "Tagebuch" also quotes Khummer's MS., p. 397.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 362.

[4] *Ibid.*, $14^2$, p. 399.

[5] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 199 : "*Vaticinium Lutheri de seditione nobilium in Germania.*"

[6] "Unschuldige Nachrichten," 1718, p. 316, with quotation from "Church Agenda, p. 52."

Wittenberg teaching : " In our own day Dr. Martin's prayers and prophecies against the troublesome and unruly spirits have, alas, grown very powerful . . . they were to perish miserably, a prophecy which I heard from his own lips : 'Mathesius, you will see what wanton attacks will be made upon this Church and University of Wittenberg, and how the people will turn heretics and come to a frightful end.' "[1]

Even J. G. Walch,[2] in 1753, at least in the Contents and Indices to his edition of Luther's Works, quotes as " Luther's Prophecies on the destruction of Germany," the passage from the German "Table-Talk"[3] which foretells God's judgments on Germany where His Evangel was everywhere despised. Yet this " prophecy " is nothing more than a natural inference from the confusion which Luther saw was the result of his work. In the same Indices, under the name " Luther,"[4] we again find given as a " prophecy " this prediction concerning Germany, under the various forms in which Luther repeated it. Lastly, under the heading " Prophecy," further reference is made to his predictions on the future lamentable fate of his own Evangel; on the distressing revival by his preachers of the doctrine of good works which he had overthrown ; on the apostasy of the most eminent Doctors of the Church ; on the abuse of his books by friends of the Evangel ; on the Saxon nobles after the death of Frederick the Elector,[5] and, finally, on the fate of Wittenberg.[6]—In all this there is, however, nothing which might not have been confidently predicted from the existing state of affairs. Walch prefaces his summary with the words : " For Luther's teaching is verily that faith and doctrine proclaimed by the prophets from the beginning of the world," just as Luther himself had once said in a sermon, that his doctrine had " been proclaimed by the patriarchs and prophets five thousand years before," but had been " cast aside."[7]

We can understand his followers, in their enthusiasm, crediting him with a true gift of prophecy, but it is somewhat difficult to believe that he himself shared their conviction. Although the

[1] Mathesius, " Historien," p. 217.
[2] Walch, 23, p. 1132.
[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 186.
[4] Walch, 23, p. 688 f.
[5] *Ibid.*, 14, p. 1360 : " *Vaticinium mense Augusto, a.* 1532." Cp. " Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 391 f.
[6] *Ibid.*, 7, p. 1353 ; Erl. ed., $18^2$, p. 23, in the sermon of 1531 on the destruction of Jerusalem, in Walch's edition under the heading : " Luther's Prophecy concerning Germany," " Luther's Prophecy on Wittenberg and its magistrates."
[7] *Ibid.*, 12, p. 1865, Sermon on the Gospel for the 8th Sunday after Trinity, Luke xix. 41. In his " Ausführliche Nachricht von M. Luthero," Walch, however, expressly admits that Luther " had not the gift of predicting " ; if he has been spoken of as a prophet, this depended on the sense in which the word was used ; he had rightly foreseen much of what would happen to the German Church," etc. " Neither did God bestow on him the gift of working miracles," but he did not need it, since he preached no new doctrine and what he taught he proved sufficiently from Holy Scripture ; indeed, the Reformation as a whole was not miraculous, since God had not intervened in it in any extraordinary manner.

belief of his disciples can be traced as clearly to Luther's own assurances, as to the fulfilment of what he predicted, yet it is uncertain whether at any time his self-confidence went to this length. Whoever is familiar with Luther's mode of speech and his habit of talking half in earnest half in jest, will have some difficulty in persuading himself that the disciples always distinguished the shade of their master's meaning. The disasters imminent in Germany, and the religious wars, might quite well have been foreseen by Luther from natural signs, and yet this is just the prophecy on which most stress is laid. Melanchthon, who was more sober in his judgments in this respect, speaks of Luther as a prophet merely in the general sense, as for instance when he says in his Postils: "Prophets under the New Law are those who restore again the ancient doctrine; such a one was Dr. Martin Luther."[1]

"What Luther, the new Elias and Paul, has prophesied cannot but come true," writes a preacher in 1562, "and those who would doubt this are unbelieving and godless, Papists, Epicureans, Sodomites or fanatics. Everything has become so frightful and bestial, what with blasphemy, swearing, cursing, unchastity and adultery, usury, oppression of the poor and every other vice, that one might fancy the last trump was sounding for the Judgment. What else do the countless, hitherto unheard-of signs, wonders and visions indicate, but that Christ is about to come to judge and punish?"[2]

Luther was most diligent in collecting and making use of any prophetical utterances which might go to prove the exalted character of his mission.

The supposed prophecy of Hus, that from his ashes would arise a swan whose voice it would be impossible to stifle, he coolly applied to himself.[3] He was fond of referring to what a Franciscan visionary at Rome had said of the time of Leo X.: "A hermit shall arise and lay waste the Papacy." Staupitz, he says, had heard this prophecy from the mouths of many at the time of his stay in Rome (1510). He himself had not heard it there, but later he, like Staupitz, had come to see that he "was the hermit meant, for Augustinian monks are commonly called hermits."[4]

[1] "Postilla," pars. iii., Dom. 3, post Adv. "Corp. ref.," 25, p. 916.

[2] "Of the horrible monstrosities and many other similar signs of the wrath of God at this time, a veracious account by a minister of the Holy Evangel," 1562, Janssen-Pastor, "Gesch. des deutschen Volkes," $6^{16}$, p. 470.

[3] In addition to the passage quoted, p. 155, n. 1, cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 83, at the end of Luther's edition of "Etliche Briefe Johann Hussens," 1537. See also Luther on the swan, xix. 2, and vol. iv., xxvi. 4.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 438. "Tischreden. Cp. Khummer in Lauterbach's "Tischreden," p. 36, n., and Mathesius, "Historien,[3]" p. 199. Cp. p. 211'.

Luther had also learnt that a German Franciscan named Hilten, who died at Eisenach about the end of the fifteenth century, had predicted much concerning the destruction of monasticism, the shattering of Papal authority and the end of all things. So highly were Hilten's alleged sayings esteemed in Luther's immediate circle that Melanchthon placed one of them at the head of the Article (27) "On monastic vows," in his theological defence of the Confession of Augsburg; "In 1516 a monk shall come, who will exterminate you monks; . . . him will you not be able to resist."[1] Luther, before this, on October 17, 1529, by letter, had urged his friend Frederick Myconius of Gotha to let him know everything he could about Hilten, "fully, entirely and at length, without forgetting anything"; "you are aware how much depends upon this. . . . I am very anxious for the information, nay, consumed with longing for it."[2] His friend's report, however, did not bring him all he wanted.[3] The Franciscan had predicted the fall of Rome about 1514, i.e. too early, and the end of the world for 1651, i.e. too late. Hence we do not hear of Luther's having brought forward the name of this prophet in support of his cause. Only on one occasion does he mention Hilten as amongst those, who "were to be consigned to the flames or otherwise condemned." The fact is that this monk of Eisenach, once an esteemed preacher, was never "condemned" or even tried by the Church, although Luther in the above letter to Myconius says that he "died excommunicate." Hilten died in his friary, fortified with the Sacraments, and at peace with the Church and his brother monks, after beseeching pardon for the scandal he had given them. The Franciscans had kept in custody the unfortunate man, who had gone off his head under the influence of astrology and apocalyptic dreams, in order that his prophecies might not do harm in the Church or the Order. He was not, however, imprisoned for life, still less was he immured, as some have said; he was simply kept under fatherly control ("*paterne custoditum*"), that those of his brethren who believed in him might not take any unfair advantage of the old man.[4]

[1] "Symbolische Bücher," [10], p. 270 f.
[2] "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 171.
[3] Reply of Myconius, December 2, 1529, *ibid.*, p. 194.
[4] Cp. the account of an apostate friar, who had been a comrade of Hilten's and who was with him during his last days, in Enders, "Luthers

In the widely read new edition of the book of Prophecies by Johann Lichtenberger, astrologer to the Emperor Frederick III. (1488), republished by Luther in 1527 with a new Preface, the latter's ideas play a certain part. Luther did not regard these Prophecies as a "spiritual revelation"; they were merely astrological predictions, as he says in the Preface,[1] views which might often prove to be questionable and faulty; nevertheless, his "belief" is "that God does actually make use of heavenly signs, such as comets, eclipses of the sun and the moon, etc., to announce impending misfortune and to warn and affright the ungodly."[2] "I myself do not scorn this Lichtenberger in everything he says, for he has come right in some things."[3] Luther is principally concerned with the chastisements predicted by Lichtenberger, but not yet accomplished—as the "priestlings" rejoiced to think—but, still to overtake them owing to their hostility to the Lutheran teaching. "Because they refuse to amend their impious life and doctrine, but on the contrary persevere in it and grow worse, I also will prophesy that in a short time their joy shall be turned to shame, and will ask them kindly to remember me then."[4] Later he speaks incidentally of Lichtenberger as a "fanatic, but still one who had foretold many things, for this the devil is well able to do."[5]

During his stay at the Wartburg he had occasion to reflect on the ancient prophecy concerning an Emperor Frederick, who should redeem the Holy Sepulchre. He was inclined to see in this Frederick, his Elector, whose right hand he himself was. The difficulty that the Elector was not Emperor

Briefwechsel," 7, p. 198; cp. also the literature quoted by Enders. Hilten's prophecy, and likewise that of the Roman Franciscan, was nevertheless, in 1872, quoted in Luther's favour by C. F. Kahnis, Professor of Theology at the University of Leipzig, in his "Gesch. der deutschen Reformation," 1, p. 178. He says: "What the Spirit of God in him bore witness to in condemnation of the fallen Church of the Middle Ages, was attested by prophetic utterances." "While Luther was at school at Eisenach, a monk named Hilten languished in the prison of the Franciscan convent," etc. He appeals to Mathesius, "Historien," Predigt, 15, p. 319; V. E. Löscher, "Vollständige Reformationsacta," 1, 1720, p. 148, and K. Jürgens, "Luther von seiner Geburt bis zum Ablassstreite," 1, 1846, p. 295.

[1] Preface reprinted in "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 250 ff. Lichtenberger's book was re-translated in this edition by Stephen Roth.

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 145.

[3] Preface, p. 253.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

[5] *Ibid.*, 2, p. 641, n. 1, to p. 145.

did not appear to him insuperable, since at Frankfurt the votes of the other electors had been given to Frederick, so that he might have been "a real emperor had he so desired." Still, he was loath to insist upon such an artifice; this solution of the difficulty might, he says, be termed mere child's play. What is much clearer to him is, that the Holy Sepulchre of the prophecy is "the Holy Scripture wherein the truth of Christ lies buried, after having been put to death by the Papists. . . . As for the actual tomb in which the Lord lay and which is now in the hands of the Saracens, God cares no more about it than about the Swiss cows. But no one can deny that amongst you, under Duke Frederick, Elector of Saxony, the living truth of the Gospel has shone forth."[1]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 561; Erl. ed., 28, p. 139 f. "Vom Missbrauch der Messen." The passage commences: "When a child I frequently heard a prophecy current in the country, viz. that an Emperor Frederick would rescue the Holy Sepulchre." This had been misunderstood and applied to the tomb at Jerusalem; but it is "of the nature of prophecies to be fulfilled before being understood." The passage on Frederick also occurs in the Latin text of this work, published previously under the title "*De abroganda missa.*" In "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 475, we there read: "*Videtur mihi ista (prophetia) in hoc Fridrico nostro impleta.*" Luther then proceeds to recount in a pleasant vein certain doubtful interpretations.

## CHAPTER XVII

### GLIMPSES OF A REFORMER'S MORALS

#### 1. Luther's Vocation. His Standard of Life

READING the lives of great men really sent by God who did great things for the salvation of souls by their revelations and their labours, whether narrated in the Bible or in the history of the Christian Church, we find that, without exception, their standards were high, that they sought to convert those with whom they came in contact primarily by their own virtuous example, that their aim was to promote the spread of their principles and doctrines by honest, truthful and upright means, and that their actions bore the stamp, not of violence, but of peaceableness and charity towards all brother Christians.

Luther's friends have always protested against his being compared with the Saints. Be their reason what it may, when it is a question of the moral appreciation of the founder of a religious movement everyone should be ready to admit, that such a founder must not present too great a contrast with those great harbingers of the faith in olden days whom he himself claims as his ideal, and in whose footsteps he pretends to tread. Luther is anxious to see St. Paul once more restored to his pinnacle; his doctrine he would fain re-establish. This being so, we may surely draw his attention to the character of St. Paul as it appears to us in his Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul brought into this dark world a new light, unknown heretofore, which had been revealed to him together with his Divine calling. His vocation he fostered by heroic virtues, and by a purity of life free from all sensuality or frivolity, preaching with all the attraction conferred by sincerity and honesty of purpose, in words and deeds full of fire, indeed, yet at the same time breathing the most patient and considerate charity.

Although we may not exact from Luther all the virtues of a St. Paul, yet he cannot complain if his private life and his practice and theory of morals be compared with the sublime mission to which he laid claim. It is true, that, when confronted with such a critical test, he was accustomed to meet it with the assertion that his Evangel was unassailable whatever his life might be. This, however, must not deter us from applying the test in question, calmly and cautiously, with every precaution against infringing the truth of history and the claims of a just and unbiassed judgment which are his right even at the hands of those whose views are not his.

The following is merely an appreciation of some of the sides of his character, not a general conspectus of his morals. Such a conspectus will only become possible at the conclusion of our work. This we mention because in what follows we shall be considering almost exclusively Luther's less favourable traits and ethical principles. It is unavoidable that we should consider here in this connection his own testimonies, and those of other witnesses, which militate against his Divine mission. His better points, both as man and writer, will be impartially pointed out elsewhere.

Luther himself admitted that Christ's words: "By their fruits ye shall know them," established a real standard for the teachers of the Gospel. He was familiar with the words of St. Bonaventure: "The sign of a call to the office of preacher is the healing of the hearers from the maladies of sin."[1] He knew that the preacher's virtue must be imparted to others, and that the sublimity and purity of his doctrine must be reflected in the amelioration of his followers.

A mere glance at Wittenberg at the time of the religious subversion will suffice to show how little such conditions were realised. Valentine Ickelsamer was referring to well-known facts when he confronted Luther with the words of Christ quoted above. He added: "You boast of holding the true doctrine on faith and charity and you shriek that men merely condemn the imperfections of your life." He is here referring to Luther's evasion. The latter had complained that people under-valued him and were scandal-

[1] Bonaventura, "Expos. in cap. ix. Lucæ."

ised at his life and that of his friends. In 1538, for instance, he was obliged, with the help of Jonas, Cruciger and Melanchthon, to dissociate himself from a theologian, Master George Karg, who had been advocating at Wittenberg doctrines which differed from his own; of him he wrote: "He is an inexperienced young man and, possibly, was scandalised at us personally in the first instance, and then fell away in his doctrine; for all those who have caused dissensions among us have begun by despising us personally."[1]

Amongst the Catholic writers who pointed out to the Wittenberg professor that his lack of a Divine call or higher mission was proved by the visible absence of any special virtue, and by his behaviour as a teacher, we may mention the Franciscan Johann Findling (Apobolymæus). In the beginning of 1521 the latter published an "admonition" addressed to Luther which relies chiefly on the reasons mentioned above.[2] In this anonymous writing the Franciscan deals so considerately with the monk, who was already then excommunicate, that recent Protestant writers have actually contrasted him with the "Popish zealots."[3] Luther he terms his "beloved," and is unwilling even to describe him as a "heretic,"[4] following in this the example of many other monks who showed the same scruple, probably on account of their own former vacillation. Excuses of various kinds are not wanting in Findling's letter.

What is of interest in the present connection is the question the author sets before the originator of the schism in the following challenge: "If you are a prophet or seer sent by God to point out the truth to men, let us perceive this, that we may believe in you, approve your action and follow you. If what you preach and write is of Divine revelation, then we are ready to honour you as a messenger sent from heaven. . . . But if it is written: 'Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they

[1] To the Elector Johann Frederick of Saxony, January 4, 1538, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 195; "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 95 ("Briefwechsel," 11, p. 323).

[2] Reprinted in "Briefwechsel Luthers," 3, p. 38 *seq.* That the author was J. Findling has been proved by N. Paulus in his work "Kaspar Schatzgeyer," 1898, p. 137 f. Cp. "Katholik," 1900, ii., p. 90 ff. Enders, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 3, p. 65, n. 1, should be corrected from this.

[3] See Enders, *ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

be of God' (1 John iv. 1). . . . We are unable to believe in you because so much strife, so many intrigues, insults, bitter reproaches, vituperation and abuse proceed from you. . . . Quarrels, blasphemies and enmities are, as St. Ambrose says, foreign to the ministers of God."[1] Your acrimony, your vituperation, your calumny and abuse are such that one is forced to ask: "Where is your Christian spirit, or your Lutheran spirit, for, according to some, Lutheran means the same as Christian?" Has not Christ commanded: "Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you? Certainly if prayer consists in calumny, abuse, detraction, reviling and cursing, then you pray excellently and effectually enough. Not one of all those I have ever read curses and abuses others as you do."[2]

The writer also points out how Luther's followers imitate and even outdo him; they were likewise turning his head by their praises; they sang hymns in his honour, but hymns coming from such lips were a poor tribute. Nor was the applause of the masses beyond suspicion, for it merely showed that what he wrote was to the taste of the multitude; for instance, when he blamed the authorities and cited them before his tribunal. It was his rude handling of his ghostly superiors which had brought the nobility and the knights to his side. Had he overwhelmed them and the laity with such reproaches as he had heaped upon the spiritual authorities, then "I know not whether you would still be in the land of the living."[3]

Apart from his want of charity and his censoriousness, other very un-apostolic qualities of Luther's were his pride and arrogance, his utter disdain for obedience, his irascibility, his jealousy and his want of seriousness in treating of the most important questions that concerned humanity; the childish, nay, womanish, outbursts in which notoriously he was wont to indulge could only serve to humble him in his own eyes.

Luther must have felt keenly the Franciscan's allusions to his untruthfulness and evasiveness, more particularly in his conduct towards the Pope, whereas Holy Scripture expressly declares that "God has no need of a lie" (Job xiii. 7).

He concludes by saying, that if Luther "is a good and gentle disciple of Christ," then he will not disregard this exhortation to turn back and recant.

Thus the Franciscan. It is to be feared, however, that Luther never read the letter to its end. As he himself said, he had nothing but scorn for anything that Catholic censors might say to him. "Attacks from without only serve to render me proud and arrogant, and you may see from my books how I despise my gainsayers; I look upon them as simple fools."[4] His state of mind even then was such as to make him incapable of calmly weighing such reproofs. In the following sentences the Franciscan above referred to has aptly described Luther's behaviour: Who-

[1] See Enders, p. 52 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[4] Cp. Döllinger, "Luther, eine Skizze," p. 53 ("KL.," $8^2$, col. 340).

ever allows himself to be overtaken by hatred and carried away by fury, "blots out the light of reason within himself and darkens his comprehension, so that he is no longer able to understand or judge aright. He rushes blindly through the surrounding fog and darkness, and knows not whither his steps will carry him. Many people, dearest Martin, believe you to be in this state."[1] "In this condition of mental confusion you cannot fail to go astray; you will credit yourself with what is far beyond you and quite outside your power."[2] In such a man eloquence was like a sword in the hand of a madman, as was sufficiently apparent in the case of Luther's followers who attempted to emulate his zeal with the pen.[3]

Erasmus was another moderate critic. In the matter of Luther's life, as was to be expected from one who had once praised him in this particular, as a rule he is inclined to be cautious, however unable to refrain from severely censuring his unevangelical manner of proceeding. The absence of the requisite standard of life seemed to Erasmus sufficient to disprove Luther's claim to the possession of the Spirit of God and a higher mission. "You descend to calumny, abuse and threats and yet you wish to be esteemed free from guile, pure, and led by the Spirit of God, not by human passion."[4] "Can the Evangel then be preached in so unevangelical a manner?" "Have all the laws of propriety been abrogated by the new-born Evangel, so that each one is at liberty to make use of any method of attack either in word or writing? Is this the liberty which you restore to us?"[5] He points more particularly to Luther's demagogism as alien to the Christian spirit: "Your object is to raise revolt, and you are perfectly aware that this has often been the result of your writings. Not thus did the Apostles act. You drag our controversial questions before the tribunal of the unlearned."[6] "God Almighty! What a contrast to the spirit of the Gospel!" exclaims Erasmus, referring to some of Luther's abuse. "A hundred books written against him would not have alienated me from him so much as these insults."[7]

Amongst the admonitions addressed to Luther at an early date by men of weight, that of Zaccaria Ferreri, the

[1] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 57.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[4] "Hyperaspistes," 1, "Opp.," ed. Ludg., 10, col. 1327.
[5] *Ibid.*, col. 1335.
[6] Cp. col. 1334.
[7] To Duke George of Saxony, June 30, 1530, "Opp.," col. 1293.

Papal Legate in Poland, written in 1520 and published in 1894, is particularly noteworthy. From the self-love and arrogance which he found displayed in Luther's character he proves to him that his could not be the work of God: "Do open your eyes and see into what an abyss of delusion you are falling. You seem to fancy that you alone are in the sunlight and that all the rest of the world is seated in the darkness of night. . . . You reproach Christianity with groping about in error for more than a thousand years; in your madness you wish to appear wiser and better than all other mortals put together, to all of whom you send forth your challenge. Rest assured your opponents are not so dull-witted as not to see through your artfulness and to perceive the inconsistency and frivolity of your doctrines." Ferreri also addressed the following appeal to Luther: "If you are determined to cast yourself into the abyss of death, at least take pity on the unfortunate people whom you are daily infecting with your poison, whose souls you are destroying and dragging along with you to perdition. The Almighty will one day require of you their blood which you have drunk, and their happiness which you have destroyed."[1]

Such voices from the past help to make us alive to the importance of the question which forms the subject of the present section. Luther's own ethical practice when defending the divinity of his mission, more particularly his doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, against all doubts and "temptations" which occurred to him, affords us, however, the best and clearest insight into his moral standards. Here his moral attitude appears in a most singular light.

We may preface what follows with some words of the Protestant historian Gottlieb Jacob Planck (†1833): "When it is necessary to lay bare Luther's failings, an historian should blush to fancy that any excuse is required for so doing."[2]

"Temptations" to doubt were not uncommon in Luther's case and in that of his friends. He accordingly instructs his disciples to combat them and to regain their lost equanimity by the same method which he himself was in the habit of

[1] "Hist. Jahrb.," 15, 1894, p. 374 ff., communicated by Joh. Fijalek.

[2] "Gesch. des protestant. Lehrbegriffs," 2, p. 135.

employing. Foremost amongst these instructions is one addressed to his pupil Hieronymus Weller of Molsdorf, a native of Freiberg, who, whilst at Wittenberg, had, under Luther's influence, relinquished the study of the law for that of theology. He was received into Luther's household as a boarder in 1527, and in 1535, after having secured his Doctorate of Theology, he was still resident there. He was one of the table-companions who took notes of Luther's "Table-Talk." This young man was long and grievously tormented with anxiety of mind and was unable to quiet, by means of the new Evangel, the scruples of conscience which were driving him to despair.

In 1530, Luther, writing from the Castle of Coburg, gave him the following counsel; we must bear in mind that it comes from one who was himself then struggling with the most acute mental anxiety.[1] "Sometimes it is necessary to drink more freely, to play and to jest and even to commit some sin ('*peccatum aliquod faciendum*') out of hatred and contempt for the devil, so that he may get no chance of making a matter of conscience out of mere trifles; otherwise we shall be vanquished if we are too anxious about not committing sin. . . . Oh that I could paint sin in a fair light,[2] so as to mock at the devil and make him see that I acknowledge no sin and am not conscious of having committed any! I tell you, we must put all the Ten Commandments, with which the devil tempts and plagues us so greatly, out of sight and out of mind. If the devil upbraids us with our sins and declares us to be deserving of death and hell, then we must say: 'I confess that I have merited death and hell,' but what then? Are you for that reason to be damned eternally? By no means. 'I know One Who suffered and made satisfaction for me, viz. Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Where He is, there I also shall be.'"

Fell counsels such as these, to despise sin and to meet the temptation by sinning, Luther had certainly not learnt from the spiritual writers of the past. Such writers, more par-

[1] In July (?), 1530 "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 159–161. In the older reprints the letter was erroneously put at a later date.

[2] "*Utinam possem aliquid insigne peccati designare modo ad eludendum diabolum!*" "*Designare*" may mean "to paint." According to Forcelli it also sometimes means "to perform," "to do." Cp. Horace, "Ep.," 1, 5, 16: "*Quid non ebrietas designat,*" and Terence "Ad.," 1, 2, 7: "*Quid designavit? Fores effregit.*"

ticularly those whom he professed to have read at his monastery, viz. Bernard, Bonaventure and Gerson, teach that sin must first be resisted, after which we may then seek prayerfully for the cause of the trouble; for this is not always due to the temptations of the devil, as Luther unquestioningly assumed in his own case and, consequently, also in that of Weller. If conscience was oppressed by sin, then, according to these spiritual writers, a remedy different from that suited to doubts against the faith must be applied, namely, penance, to be followed by acts of hope. If the trouble in Weller's case was one of doubts concerning faith, anyone but Luther would have been careful to ascertain first of all whether these doubts referred to the specifically Lutheran doctrine or to the other truths of the Christian revelation. Luther, however, at the commencement of the letter, simply declares: "You must rest assured that this temptation comes from the devil, and that you are thus tortured because you believe in Christ"—i.e. in the Lutheran doctrine and in the Christ preached by that sect, as is clear from the reference immediately following to the "foes of the Evangel," who live in security and good cheer.

The whole letter, though addressed to one standing on the brink of despair, contains not a single word about prayer for God's help, about humbling oneself or striving after a change of heart. Beyond the above-mentioned reference to Christ, Who covers over all our sins, and to the need of contemning sin, we find merely the following natural, indeed, of the earth earthly, remedies recommended, viz.: To seek company, to indulge in jest and play, for instance, with Luther's wife, ever to keep a good temper and, finally, "to drink more deeply." "If the devil says, 'Don't drink,' answer him at once: 'Just because you don't wish it, I shall drink, and deeply too.' We must always do the opposite of what the devil bids. Why, think you, do I drink so much, converse so freely and give myself up so frequently to the pleasures of the table, if it be not in order to mock at the devil, and to plague him when he tries to torment and mock at me?"

Finally he encourages the sorely tried man by telling him how Staupitz had foretold that the temptations which he, Luther, endured in the monastery would help to make a great man of him, and that he had now, as a matter of fact,

become a "great doctor." "You, too," he continues, "will become a great man, and rest assured that such [prophetic] words, particularly those that fall from the lips of great and learned men, are not without their value as oracles and predictions."

It is not surprising that such counsels and the consolation of possible future greatness did not improve the pitiable condition of the unfortunate man, but that he long continued to suffer.

Of a like nature is the advice which Luther in the following year gave another of his boarders and companions, Johann Schlaginhaufen, as a remedy for the same malady, which indeed seems to have been endemic in his immediate circle. The passages in question, from Schlaginhaufen's own notes, may be useful in further elucidating Luther's instructions to Weller.

According to what we are told Luther spoke as follows to Schlaginhaufen on December 14, 1531, at a time when the latter had been reduced to despair owing to his sins and to his lack of the fiducial faith required by the new Evangel. "It is false that God hates sinners; if the devil reminds us of the chastisement of Sodom and other instances of God's wrath, then let us confront him with Christ, Who became man for us. Had God hated sinners He would not have sent His own Son for us [here again not the slightest allusion to any effort after an inward change of heart, but merely what follows]: Those only does God hate who will not be justified, i.e. those who will not be sinners ('*qui non volunt esse peccatores*')."[1]

In these admonitions to Schlaginhaufen the consolatory thought of the merits of Christ, which alone can save us, occurs more frequently, though in a very Lutheran guise: "Why torment yourself so much about sin? Even had you as many sins on your conscience as Zwingli, Carlstadt, Münzer and all the ungodly, faith in Christ would overcome them all. Alas, faith is all that lacks us!" If the devil could reproach you with unbelief and such-like faults, says Luther, then it would be a different matter; but he does not worry us about the great sins of the first table, but about other sins; "he annoys us with mere trifles; if we would consent to worship the Pope, then we should be his dear children."[2] "We must cling to the Man Who is called Christ, He will soon put right whatever we may have done amiss."[3]

"So that at last I said," Schlaginhaufen continues, "Then, Doctor, it would be better that I should remain a rogue and a sinner. And the Doctor replied: That Thou, O Lord, mayst be

[1] Those, i.e., who are unwilling to feel that they are sinners. Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 9.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 88. In May, 1532. Cp. "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 308.

justified in Thy words, and mayst overcome when Thou art judged" (Ps. l. 6).[1]

With this pupil, as with Weller, Luther enters into an account of his own temptations and the means he employed for ridding himself of them.

He himself, he says, in December, 1531, had often been made a target for the shafts of Satan. "About ten years ago I first experienced this despair and these temptations concerning the wrath of God. Afterwards I had some peace so that I enjoyed good days and even took a wife, but then the temptations returned again."[2]

"I never had any temptation greater or more burdensome than that which assailed me on account of my preaching, when I thought: It is you alone who are bringing all this business about; if it is wrong, then you alone are accountable for so many souls which go down to hell. During such temptations I often went right down to hell, only that God called me back and strengthened me, because it was His Word and true doctrine. But it costs much before one can arrive at such comfort."[3]

Here also he speaks of his remedy of a free indulgence in food and drink: "Were I to give in to my want of appetite, then I should [in this frame of mind] for three days eat not a scrap; it is a double fast to me to eat and drink without the least inclination. When the world sees this it looks upon it as drunkenness, but God shall judge whether it is drunkenness or fasting . . . therefore keep stomach and head alike filled."[4]

According to another communication of Luther's to this pupil, he was in the habit of repelling the devil, when he troubled him too much about his sins, by cynical speeches on the subject of the evacuations. After one such statement the parish priest of Wittenberg, the apostate Bugenhagen, interrupted him, and, in perfect agreement with Luther, said, "I too would say to the devil: 'My good devil, I have committed a great sin, for Pope and bishop anointed my hands and I have defiled them; that is also a great sin.'"[5] From such coarse speeches Schlaginhaufen passes on to relate other things which the veracious historian is not at liberty to suppress. The anxious pupil who was seeking consolation continues: "The Doctor [Luther] said: 'Nevertheless, the devil was unable to get over my arguments. Often have I called my wife, et cetera, in order to allay the temptation and to free myself from such idle thoughts.'"[6]

What Luther, or rather Schlaginhaufen, merely hints at, we find explained in greater detail in the diary of Luther's pupil Conrad Cordatus: "Thoughts of terror and sadness have

[1] Schlaginhaufen, p. 88.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 9. Here and in what follows, according to Preger, the MS. notes of Veit Dietrich agree with Schlaginhaufen's account.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 88 f. "Papst und Bischof haben mir die Hände gesalbt, und ich habe sie beschissen im Dreck, do ich den Ars wuschet."

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 89

worried me more than enemies and labours. In my attempts to drive them away I met with little success. I also tried caressing my wife in order that this distraction might free me from the suggestions of Satan ; but in temptations such as these we can find no comfort, so greatly is our nature depraved. It is necessary, however, to make every kind of effort to banish these thoughts by some stronger emotion."[1] One of the chief Latin versions of Luther's Colloquies gives this passage in his "Table-Talk" as follows : "How often have I taken with my wife those liberties which nature permits merely in order to get rid of Satan's temptations. Yet all to no purpose, for he refused to depart ; for Satan, as the author of death, has depraved our nature to such an extent that we will not admit any consolation. Hence I advise everyone who is able to drive away these Satanic thoughts by diverting his mind, to do so, for instance, by thinking of a pretty girl, of money-making, or of drink, or, in fine, by means of some other vivid emotion. The chief means, however, is to think of Jesus Christ, for He comes to console and to make alive."[2] The latter passage is to be found, with unimportant alterations, in Rebenstock's edition of the Colloquies, though, perhaps out of consideration for Luther, it there commences with the words : "For Satan" ;[3] in the German "Table-Talk" it is not found at all.[4]

"Let us fix our mind on other thoughts," Luther had also said to Schlaginhaufen, "on thoughts of dancing, or of a pretty girl, that also is good. Gerson too wrote of this."[5] As a matter of fact, Gerson certainly wrote nothing about getting rid of temptations by means of sensual images. On the contrary, in the passages in question of his spiritual writings, he teaches something quite

[1] "Tagebuch über M. Luther," by C. Cordatus, ed. by H. Wrampelmeyer, 1883, p. 450 : "*Etiam in complexus veni coniugis, ut saltem ille pruritus auferret illas cogitationes satanæ. . . . Laborandum est omnibus modis, ut vehementiore aliquo affectu pellantur.*"

[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 299. The Halle MS. on which Bindseil bases his work really depends on the statements of Luther's pupil Lauterbach. Here Luther's words run : "*Quoties meam uxorem complexus sum, nudam contrectavi, ut tantum sathanæ cogitationes illo pruritu pellerem.* But all to no purpose, *nolebat cedere*," etc.

[3] "Colloquia, meditationes, consolationes, etc. M. Lutheri," Francof., 1571, 2, p. 225′ (=125′).

[4] As to this, Wrampelmeyer, a Protestant, remarks (p. 451) in his edition of Cordatus's Diary, mentioned above : "The German 'Table-Talk,' which agrees almost entirely with the Latin version, does not, in Erl. ed., 60, p. 110, and Förstemann, 3, p. 122, contain these words, but replaces them by the following : 'I have frequently made use of various means in order to drive away Satan, but it was of no use.' It is clear that words so compromising gave offence and that others were substituted instead of those given in the Latin text, which formed the basis of the German 'Table-Talk.' According to the Notes of Cordatus, however, Luther's words appear in quite a different light." "The words of the Latin 'Table-Talk' : '*ut de puella pulchra, avaritia, ebrietate*,' have also been replaced in the German version by more harmless expressions."

[5] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 11.

different and insists, first and foremost, on the avoidance of sin. He proposes our doing the exact opposite of the wicked or unworthy acts suggested by the evil spirit. He, like all Catholic masters of the spiritual life, indeed instructs those tempted to distract their minds, but by pious, or at least, indifferent and harmless means.[1]

### 2. Some of Luther's Practical Principles of Life

We find in Luther no dearth of strong expressions which, like his advice to Weller and Schlaginhaufen, seem to discountenance fear of sin, penance and any striving after virtue. It remains to determine from their context the precise meaning which he attached to them.

#### *Luther on Sin*

As early as 1518 Luther, in a sermon at Erfurt, had given vent to the words already quoted: "What does it matter whether we commit a fresh sin so long as we do not despair but repeat: Thou, my God, still livest, Christ, my Lord, has destroyed sin; then at once the sin is gone. . . . The reason why the world is so out of joint and lies in such error is that there has been no real preacher for so long."[2]

"Hence we say," so later on we read in his exposition of John xvii., "that those who are true Saints of Christ must be great sinners and yet remain Saints. . . . Of themselves, and for all their works, they are nothing but sinners and under condemnation, but by the holiness of another, viz. of the Lord Christ, bestowed on them by faith, they are made holy."[3]

And further: "The Christian faith differs greatly from

[1] "Opp.," Antwerpiæ, 1706, 3, p. 242 *seq.*; p. 589 *seq.* Aug. Hardeland ("Gesch. der speziellen Seelsorge in der vorreformatorischen Kirche und der Kirche der Reformation," Berlin, 1898, p. 261) remarks: "The idea that we must always do the exact opposite of what the devil suggests, is the leading one in Gerson's Tractate '*De remediis contra pusillanimitatem.*'" He is of opinion that, in advising Weller to sin, Luther was "using this maxim of Gerson's, and probably only meant: 'Do not be afraid to do what, from the standpoint of your scrupulosity, appears to be sinful.'" Luther's advice, however, was not intended for a scrupulous person predisposed to exaggeration or to narrowness of heart, but for all those who despaired of their salvation and were unable to believe in Luther's doctrine of the forgiveness of sins and in his assurance of salvation. "*Cogitationes immanissimæ*," Luther calls Weller's ideas, "*quando diabolus reos* (*nos*) *egerit mortis et inferni. . . . In æternum condemnaberis?*" Weller, the disciple, has first to learn: "*novi quendam, qui passus est pro me ac satisfecit*," etc.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 254. [3] *Ibid.*, 50, p. 248.

the faith and religion of the Pope and the Turks, etc., for, by it, in spite of his consciousness of sin, a man, amidst afflictions and the fear of death, continues to hope that God for Christ's sake will not impute to him his sin. . . . But so great is this grace that a man is startled at it and finds it hard to believe."[1]—He himself and many others often found it difficult, indeed terribly difficult, to believe. They were obliged to "reassure themselves" by the Word of God. A few more quotations may here be added.

"To be clean of heart not only means not to harbour any impure thoughts, but that the conscience has been enlightened and assured by the Word of God that the law does not defile; hence the Christian must understand that it does not harm him whether he keeps it [the law] or not; nay, he may even do what is otherwise forbidden, or leave undone what is usually commanded; it is no sin in him, for he is incapable of sinning because his heart is clean. On the other hand, an impure heart defiles itself and sins in everything because it is choked with law."[2]

"God says in the law: Do this, leave that undone, this do I require of thee. But the Evangel does not preach what we are to do or to leave undone, it requires nothing of us. On the contrary. It does not say: Do this or that, but only tells us to hold out our hands and take: Behold, O man, what God has done for thee; He has caused His own Son to take flesh for thee, has allowed Him to be done to death for thy sake, and to save thee from sin, death and the devil; believe this and accept it and thou shalt be saved."[3]

Such statements, which must not be regarded as spoken merely on the spur of the moment, rest on the idea that sin only troubles the man who looks to the law; let us look rather to the Gospel, which is nothing but grace, and simply cover over our sin by a firm faith in Christ, then it will not harm us in any way. Yet it would be quite a mistake to infer from this that Luther always regarded sin with indifference, or that he even recommended it on principle; as a rule he did not go so far as we just saw him do (p. 175 ff.) in his exhortations to persons tempted; there, moreover, his invitation to commit sin, and his other misplaced instructions,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 360. [2] *Ibid.*, 51, p. 284.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 367; Erl. ed., 33, p. 5.

may possibly be explained by the excitement of the hand-to-hand struggle with the devil, in which he fancied himself to be engaged whenever he had to do with doubts concerning his doctrines, or with souls showing signs of halting or of despair. On the contrary, he teaches, as a rule, that sin is reprehensible; he also instructs man to fight against concupiscence which leads up to it. (Vol. i., p 114 f.) He is fond of exhorting to amendment of life and to avoid any scandal. Still, the barriers admitted by his doctrine of Justification against this indifference with regard to sin were not strong enough.[1]

As to Luther's teaching on the manner in which sin was forgiven, we shall merely state his ideas on this subject, without attempting to bring them into harmony; the fact is that, in Luther's case, we must resign ourselves to a certain want of sequence.

He teaches: "Real faith is incompatible with any sin whatsoever; whoever is a believer must resist sinful lusts by the power and the impulse of the faith and Spirit."[2] "Whoever has faith in the forgiveness of sins does not obey sinful lusts, but fights against them until he is rid of them."[3] Where mortal sin has been committed, there, according to him, real faith was manifestly lacking; it had already been denied and was no longer active, or even present. A revival of faith, together with the necessary qualities of confidence, covers over all such sins, including the sin of unbelief. On the other hand, sins committed where faith was present, though for the moment too weak to offer resistance, were sins of frailty; there faith at once regains the upper hand and thus forgiveness or non-imputation of the sin is secured. The denial of Peter was, according to Luther, a sin of frailty, because it was merely due to "chance weakness and foolishness." Nevertheless he declares that, like the treason of Judas, it was deserving of death.[4]

Luther teaches further, affording us incidentally an insight into the inadequacy of his doctrine from another point of view, that, in the case of the heathen or of Christians who had no faith, not only was every sin a mortal sin, but also all works, even good works, were mortal sins; indeed, they would be so even in the faithful, were it not for Christ, the Redeemer, Whom we must cling to with confidence. Moreover, as we know, man's evil inclinations, the motions of concupiscence, the bad tendencies

[1] Cp. vol. iv., xxviii. 3 and 4. Luther's famous "*pecca fortiter*" is discussed at length below (p. 199 ff.), and all that might tend to explain the words is passed in review.

[2] See J. Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," $2^2$, 1901, p. 215.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 50, p. 58.

[4] Cp. passages quoted by Köstlin, *ibid.*

of the pious, were all grievous sins in Luther's eyes ; original sin with its involuntary effects he considers an enduring offence ; only faith, which merits forgiveness and overcomes the terrors of conscience by the saving knowledge of Christ, can ensure man against it, and the other sins.

" Thus our salvation or rejection depends entirely on whether we believe or do not believe in Christ. . . . Unbelief retains all sin, so that it cannot be forgiven, just as faith cancels all sin ; hence outside of such faith everything is and remains sinful and worthy of damnation, even the best of lives, and the best of works. . . . In faith a Christian's life and works are pleasing to God, outside of Christ everything is lost and doomed to perdition ; in Christ all is good and blessed, so that even the sin which flesh and blood inherits from Adam is neither a cause of harm nor of condemnation." " This, however, is not to be understood as a permit to sin and to commit evil ; for since faith brings forgiveness of sin . . . it is impossible that he who lives openly unrepentant and secure in his sins and lusts should be a Christian and a believer."[1] In conclusion he explains to what category of hearers he is speaking : " To them [the faithful] this is said, in order that sin may not harm nor condemn them ; to the others, who are without faith and reprobate, we do not preach."[2] Amongst the numerous other questions which here force themselves upon us, one is, why Luther did not address his Evangel to those " without faith," and to the " reprobate," according to the example of Christ.[3]

The fanatics, particularly Carlstadt, were not slow in attacking Luther on account of his doctrine of faith alone. Carlstadt described this " faith " of Luther's as a " paper faith " and a " heartless faith." He perceived the " dangers to the interior life which might arise from the stress laid on faith alone, viz. the enfeebling of the moral powers and the growth of formalism."[4] The modern Protestant biographer of Carlstadt, from whom these words are taken, points out that " moral laxity too often went hand-in-hand with Luther's doctrine of the forgiveness of sins."[5] " Owing to an assiduous depreciation of the moral code no criterion existed according to which the direction of the impulses of the will could be determined, according to Luther's doctrine of Justification."[6] The Lutheran teaching was " admirably adapted to suit the life of the individual," but the moral laxity which followed in its train " could not be considered as merely an exceptional phenomenon."[7] There is no doubt that " much dross came to the surface when ' faith only ' was applied to the forgiveness of sins."[8]

A Protestant theologian, A. Hegler, one of those who demur to Luther's doctrines, mentioned above, owing to their moral con-

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., 50, p. 58.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[3] See above, p. 26.
[4] H. Barge, " Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt," 2, 1905, p. 73.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2, p. 156.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 292.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 430.
[8] *Ibid.*, 1, p. 213.

sequences, remarks: "It remains that the idea of justification without works was, at the time of the Reformation, often found side by side with moral laxity, and that, sometimes, the latter was actually the effect of the former." Seeking the reason why so talented a man as Sebastian Franck should have seceded, after having been a Lutheran preacher till 1528, he remarks: "There is much to lead us to suppose that the sight of the moral indifference and coarseness of the evangelicals was the determining factor."[1]

After having considered Luther's principles with regard to the theory of sin, we now proceed to give some of his utterances on penance.

### *Luther's Views on Penance*

Although he speaks of repentance as the first step towards salvation in the case of the sinner, yet the idea of repentance, remorse or contrition was ever rather foreign to him. He will not admit as valid any repentance aroused by the demands and menaces of the law;[2] in the case of man, devoid of free will, it must be a result of Divine charity and grace; repentance without a love of justice is, he says, at secret enmity with God and only makes the sin greater.[3] Yet he also declares, not indeed as advocating penance as such, that it merely acts through faith "previous to and independently of all works," of which, as we know, he was always suspicious; all that was needed was to believe "in God's Mercy," and repentance was already there.[4]

He is nevertheless in favour of the preachers exhorting Christians to repentance by diligent reference to the commandments, and to the chastisements threatened by God, so as to instil into them a salutary fear. The law, he goes on to say, in contradiction to the above, must do its work, and by means of its terrors drive men to repentance even though love should have no part in it. Here he is perfectly conscious of the objection which might be raised, viz. that he had made "repentance to proceed from, and to be the result of, justifying faith." To this he replies, that repentance itself forms part of the "common faith," because it is first necessary to

[1] "Geist und Schrift bei Sebastian Franck," Freiburg, 1892, p. 24 f.

[2] Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 1², p. 188. Luther does not admit the "*timor servilis*" of Catholic theology, and in his arbitrary fashion he represents it as equivalent to mere "fear of the gallows," "*timor serviliter servilis.*"

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 506; Erl. ed., 31, p. 181.

believe that there is a God Who commands and makes afraid; this circumstance justifies the retention of penance, "for the sake of the common, unlearned folk."[1]

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, formulates her doctrine of penance and regeneration, for the most cultured as well as for the "common and unlearned," in terms simple and comprehensible, and in perfect accord with both Scripture and theology: Adults "are prepared for justification, when, moved and assisted by Divine grace . . . they, of their free will, turn to God, believing that those things are true which have been Divinely revealed and promised; above all, that the ungodly is justified by God's grace and by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; recognising with a wholesome fear of the Divine Justice their sinfulness, they turn to God's mercy, and, being thus established in hope, gain the confidence that God, for Christ's sake, will be gracious to them. Thus they begin to love God as the source of all justice and to conceive a certain hatred ('*odium aliquod*') and detestation for sin, i.e. to perform that penance which must take place previous to baptism. Finally, they must have the intention of receiving baptism, of commencing a new life and of observing the commandments of God."[2] "Those who, after having received the grace of justification, fall into sin ['without loss of faith'],[3] with God's help may again be justified, regaining through the Sacrament of Penance and Christ's merits the grace they had lost. . . . Christ Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Penance when He said: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained.' Hence we must teach that the repentance of a sinner after falling into sin is very different from that which accompanies baptism, and involves not merely a turning away from, and a detestation for, sin, or a contrite and humble heart, but also a Sacramental confession of the sin, or at least a purpose of making such a confession in due season, and receiving the priestly absolution; finally, it involves satisfaction by fasting, almsdeeds, prayer and other pious exercises."[4]

Such, according to the Catholic doctrine, is the process approved of by Holy Scripture, the various phases of which rest alike on religion and psychology, on the positive ordinances of God and on human nature. Luther, however, thrust all this aside; his quest was for a simpler and easier method, through faith alone, by which sin may be vanquished or covered over.

His moral character, so far as it reveals itself in his teach-

[1] Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 189.
[2] Council of Trent, Sess. VI., "*decretum de iustificatione*," c. 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, c. 15.
[4] *Ibid.*, c. 14.

ing, is here displayed in an unfavourable light, for he is never weary of emphasising the ease with which sin can be covered over—and that in language which must necessarily have had a bad effect on discipline—when we might have expected to hear some earnest words on penance. A few of his sayings will help to make yet clearer his earlier statements.

"You see how rich the Christian is," he says, "since, even should he desire it, he is unable to forfeit his salvation, no matter how many sins he may commit, unless indeed he refuses to believe ('*nisi nolit credere*'). No sin but unbelief can bring him to damnation; everything else is at once swept away by this faith, so soon as he returns to it, or recollects the Divine promise made to the baptised."[1]

"Christ's Evangel is indeed a mighty thing. . . . God's Word brings everything to pass speedily, bestows forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life; and the cost of this is merely that you should hear the Word, and after hearing it believe. If you believe, then you possess it without any trouble, expense, delay or difficulty."[2]

"No other sin exists in the world save unbelief. All others are mere trifles, as when my little Hans or Lena misbehave themselves in the corner, for we all take that as a big joke. In the same way faith covers the stench of our filth before God. . . . All sins shall be forgiven us if only we believe in the Son."[3]

"As I have often said, the Kingdom of Christ is nothing else but forgiveness and perpetual blotting out of sin, which is extinguished, covered over, swept away and made clean while we are living here." "Christ makes things so easy for us who stand before God in fear and trembling."[4]

"*Summa summarum:* Our life is one long '*remissio peccatorum*,' and forgiveness of sin, otherwise it could not endure."[5]

Here, indeed, we have one of the main props of Luther's practical theology. To this the originator of the doctrine sought to remain faithful to the very end of his life, whereas certain other points of his teaching he was not unwilling to revise. His ideas on sin and repentance had sprung originally from his desire to relieve his own conscience,[6] and, of this, they ever retained the mark. The words and doctrine of a teacher are the best witnesses we have to his moral character, and here the doctrine is one which affords but little stimulus to virtue and Christian perfection, but rather the reverse.

In what follows we shall consider more closely the relation

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 529; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 59, in the work "*De captivitate babylonica*."
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., $6^2$, p. 157, in the "Hauspostille."
[3] *Ibid.*, 4, p. 131, "Hauspostille." Cp. Weim. ed., 36, p. 187.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 132, "Hauspostille."
[5] *Ibid.*, 62, p. 267, "Tischreden."
[6] Cp. vol. i., p. 289 ff.

between this doctrine and the effort after virtue, while at the same time taking into account that passivity, nay, entire unfreedom of the will for doing what is good, proclaimed by Luther.

### *Luther on Efforts after Higher Virtue*

The effort to attain perfection and to become like to Christ, which is the highest aim of the Christian, is scarcely promoted by making the whole Gospel to consist merely in the happy enjoyment of forgiveness. The hard work required for the building up of a truly virtuous life on the rude soil of the world, necessarily involving sacrifice, self-denial, humiliation and cheerful endurance of suffering, was more likely to be looked at askance and carefully avoided by those who clung to such a view.

On the pretext of opposing the "false humility of the holy-by-works," Luther attacks many practices which have always been dear to pious souls striving after God. At the same time he unjustly implies that the Catholics made holiness to consist merely in extraordinary works, performed, moreover, by human strength alone, without the assistance of grace. "This all comes from the same old craze," he declares;[1] "as soon as we hear of holiness we immediately think of great and excellent works and stand gaping at the Saints in heaven as though they had got there by their own merits. What *we* say is that the Saints must be good, downright sinners." (See above, p. 180.) "The most holy state is that of those who believe that Christ alone is our holiness, and that by virtue of His holiness, as already stated, everything about us, our life and actions, are holy, just as the person too is holy."[2]

After this, who can contend that Luther sets before the world the sublime and arduous ideal of a life of virtue such as has ever been cherished by souls inflamed with the love of Christ? To rest content with a standard so low is indeed to clip the wings of virtue. This is in no way compensated for by Luther's fervent exhortations to the Christian, "to confess the Word, more particularly in temptation and persecution," because true and exalted virtue was present wherever there was conflict on behalf of the Word [as preached by him], or by his asseveration, that "where the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 50, p. 248. [2] *Ibid.*

Word is and brings forth fruit so that men are willing to suffer what must be suffered for it, there indeed we have living Saints." Living Saints? Surely canonisation is here granted all too easily. Nor does Luther make good the deficiencies of his teaching, by depriving good works of any merit for heaven, or by requiring that they should be performed purely out of love of God, without the least thought of reward. He thereby robs the practice of good works of a powerful stimulus, as much in conformity with the Will of God as with human nature. He is too ready here to assume that the faithful are angels, raised above all incentive arising from the hope of reward, though, elsewhere, he looks upon men only too much as of the earth earthly.

At any rate he teaches that good works spring spontaneously from the faith by which man is justified, and that the outcome is a life of grace in which the faithful has every incentive to the performance of his duty and to works of charity towards his neighbour. He also knows how to depict such spontaneous, practical efforts on the part of the righteous in attractive colours and with great feeling. Passages of striking beauty have already been quoted above from his writings. Too often, as he himself complains, such good works are conspicuous by their absence among the followers of the evangelical faith; he is disappointed to see that the new teaching on faith serves only to engender lazy hearts. Yet this was but natural; nature cannot be overcome even in the man who is justified without an effort on his part; without exertion, self-sacrifice, self-conquest and prayer no one can make any progress and become better pleasing to God; not holiness-by-works, but the sanctifying of our works, is the point to be aimed at, and, for this purpose, Holy Scripture recommends no mere presumptuous, fiducial faith as the starting-point, but rather a pious fear of God, combined with a holy life; no mere reliance on a misapprehension of the freedom of the children of God, but rather severe self-discipline, watchfulness and mortification of the whole man, who, freely and of his own accord, must make himself the image of his crucified Saviour. Those of Luther's followers who, to their honour, succeeded in so doing, did so, and were cheered and comforted, not by following their leader's teaching, but by the grace of God which assists every man.

We must, however, refer to another point of importance already once discussed. Why speak at all of good works and virtue, when Luther's doctrine of the passivity and unfreedom of the will denies the existence of all liberty as regards either virtue or sin? (See vol. ii., p. 223 ff.)

Luther's doctrine of Justifying Faith is closely bound up with his theories on the absence of free will, man's inability to what do is good, and the total depravity of human nature resulting from original sin. In his "*De servo arbitrio*" against Erasmus, Luther deliberately makes the absence of free will the basis of his view of life.

Deprived of any power of choice or self-determination, man is at the mercy of external agents, diabolical or Divine, to such an extent that he is unable to will except what they will. Whoever has and keeps the Spirit of God and the faith cannot do otherwise than fulfil the Will of God; but whoever is under the domination of the devil is his spiritual captive. To sum up what was said previously: man retains at most the right to dispose of things inferior to him, not, however, any actual, moral freedom of choice, still less any liberty for doing what is good such as would exclude all interior compulsion. He is created for eternal death or for everlasting life; his destiny he cannot escape; his lot is already pre-ordained. Luther's doctrine brings him into line, even as regards the "harshest consequences of the predestinarian dogma, with Zwingli, Calvin, and Melanchthon in his earliest evangelical Theology."[1] According to one of the most esteemed of Lutheran theologians, "what finds full and comprehensive expression in the work '*De servo arbitrio*' is simply the conviction which had inspired Luther throughout his struggle for his pet doctrine of salvation, viz. the doctrine of the pure grace of God as against the prevailing doctrine of free will and man's own works."[2] According to this theory, in spite of the lack of free will, God requires of man that he should keep the moral law, and, to encourage him, sets up a system of rewards and punishments. Man is constrained to this as it were in mockery, that, as Luther says, God may make him to realise his utter powerlessness.[3] God indeed deplores the spiritual

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 664. Cp. Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," 1², p. 370. [2] Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 369.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 691 ff.; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 231 *seq.*, "*De servo arbitrio.*"

ruin of His people—this much the author is willing to allow to his opponent Erasmus—but, the God Who does so is the God of revelation, not the Hidden God. "The God Who conceals Himself beneath His Majesty grieves not at man's undoing, He takes no step to remedy it, but works all things, both life and death." God, "by that unsearchable knowledge of His, wills the death of the sinner."[1]

"Even though Judas acted of his own will and without compulsion, still his willing was the work of God, Who moved him by His Omnipotence as He moves all things."[2] In the same way, according to Luther, the hardening of Pharao's heart was in the fullest sense God's work.[3] Adam's sin likewise is to be traced back to the Will of God.[4] We must not ask, however, how all this can be reconciled with the goodness and justice of God. We must not expect God to act according to human law.[5]

It was necessary to recall the above in order to show how such a doctrine robs the moral law of every inward relation to its last end, and degrades it till it becomes a mere outward, arbitrary barrier. Luther may well thank his want of logic that this system failed to be carried to its extremest consequences; the ways of the world are not those of the logician.

Who but God can be held responsible in the last instance for the world being, as Luther complains, the "dwelling-place" of the devil, and his very kingdom? According to him the devil is its "Prince and God";[6] every place is packed with devils.[7] Indeed, "the whole world is Satanic and to a certain extent identified with Satan."[8] "In such a kingdom all the children of Adam are subject to their lord and king, i.e. the devil."[9] Such descriptions given by Luther are often so vivid that one might fancy the devil

[1] Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 359.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 715; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 263, "*De servo arbitrio.*"

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 711=p. 258. [4] Cp. Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 355.

[5] Köstlin, *ibid.*, p. 359. Köstlin admits the "questionable character" of the doctrine, though in rather mild language, e.g. p. 370.

[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 20, $1^2$, p. 163.

[7] "*Prussia est plena dæmonibus*," etc. Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 65.

[8] "The devil is in the world, *vel potius ipse mundus concretive vel abstractive*." Letter of January 3, 1534, to Amsdorf, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 376.

[9] "Werke," Erl. ed., 20, $1^2$, p. 163.

was making war upon God almost like some independent power. Luther, however, admits that the devil has "only a semblance of the Godhead, and that God has reserved to Himself the true Godhead."[1] Ethically the consequence of such a view of the world is a pessimism calculated to lame both the powers and the desires of anyone striving after higher aims.

Luther's pessimism goes so far, that too often he is ready to believe that, unlike the devil, Christ loves "to show Himself weak" in man. He writes, for instance, that Satan desired to drag him in his toils down into the abyss, but that the "weak Christ" was ever victorious, or at least "fighting bravely."[2] That it was possible for Christ to be overcome he would not have allowed, yet, surely, an excuse might have been sought for man's failings in Christ's own "weakness," particularly if man is really devoid of free will for doing what is good.

Luther was always fond of imputing weaknesses and sins to the Saints. Their works he regarded as detracting from the Redemption and the Grace of Christ, which can be appropriated only by faith. Certain virtues manifested by the Saints and their heroic sacrifices Luther denounced as illusions, as morally impossible and as mere idolatry.

"The Apostles themselves were sinners, yea, regular scoundrels. . . . I believe that the prophets also frequently sinned grievously, for they were men like us."[3] He quotes examples from the history of the Apostles previous to the descent of the Holy Ghost. Elsewhere he alludes to the failings they betrayed even in later life. "To hear" that the Apostles, even after they had received the Holy Ghost, were "sometimes weak in the faith," is, he says, "very consoling to me and to all Christians." Peter "not only erred" in his treatment of the Gentile Christians (Gal. ii. 11 ff.), "but sinned grossly and grievously." The separation of Paul and Barnabas (Acts xv. 39) was very blameworthy. "Such instances," he says, "are placed before us for our comfort; for it is very consoling to hear that such great Saints have also sinned." "Samson, David and many other fine and mighty characters, filled as they were with the Holy Ghost, fell into great sins," which is a "splendid consolation to faint-hearted and troubled consciences." Paul himself did not believe as

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 65.

[2] To Justus Jonas, December 29, 1527, "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 163: "*Christus infirmus per vestras orationes adhuc superat vel saltem pugnat fortiter.*" Cp. "Briefwechsel," 6, p. 173.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 165, "Table-Talk."

firmly as he spoke ; he was, in point of fact, better able to speak and write than to believe. " It would scarcely be right for us to do all that God has commanded, for then what need would there be for the forgiveness of sins ? "[1]

" Unless God had told us how foolishly the Saints themselves acted, we should not have been able to arrive at the knowledge of His Kingdom, which is nothing else but the forgiveness of sins."[2] Here He is referring to the stumbling and falls of the Patriarchs ; he adds : " What wonder that we stumble ? And yet this is no cloak or excuse for committing sin." Nevertheless, he speaks of Abraham, whom he credits with having fallen into idolatry and sin, as though holiness of life were of no great importance : " Believe as he did and you are just as holy as he."[3] " We must interpret all these stories and examples as told of men like ourselves ; it is a delusion to make such a fuss about the Saints. We ought to say : If they were holy, why, so are we ; if we are sinners, why, so were they ; for we are all born of the same flesh and blood and God created us as much as He did them ; one man is as good as another, and the only difference between us is faith. If you have faith and the Word of God, you are just as great ; you need not trouble yourself about being of less importance than he, unless your faith is less strong."[4]

By his " *articulus remissionis*," the constantly reiterated Evangel of the forgiveness of sins by faith, Luther certainly succeeded in putting down the mighty from their seats, but whether he inspired the lowly to qualify for their possession is quite another question.

On the unsafe ground of the assurance of salvation by faith alone even the fanatics were unwilling to stand ; their preference was for a certain interior satisfaction to be secured by means of works. Hence they and their teaching—to tell the truth a very unsatisfactory one—became a target for Luther's sarcasm. By a pretence of strict morals they would fain give the lie to the words of the Our Father, " Forgive us our trespasses " ; " but we are determined not to make the Our Father untrue, nor to reject this article (the '*remissio peccatorum*'), but to retain it as our most precious treasure, in which lies our safety and salvation."[5] An over-zealous pursuit of sanctity and the works of the Spirit might end by detracting from a trusting reliance upon Christ. In Catholic times, for instance, the two things,

[1] Schlaginhaufen, " Tischreden," p. 133. The passage will be given in detail later.

[2] " Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 355 ; Erl. ed., 33, p. 374.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 341=359.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 342=360.

[5] " Werke," Erl. ed., $18^2$, p. 356 f.

works and faith, had, so he complains, been "hopelessly mixed." "This, from the beginning until this very day, has been a stumbling-block and hindrance to the new doctrine of faith. If we preach works, then an end is made of faith; hence, if we teach faith, works must go to the wall."[1]

We must repeat, that, by this, Luther did not mean to exclude works; on the contrary, he frequently counsels their performance. He left behind him many instructions concerning the practice of a devout life, of which we shall have to speak more fully later. On the other hand, however, we can understand how, on one occasion, he refused to draw up a Christian Rule of Life, though requested to do so by his friend Bugenhagen, arguing that such a thing was superfluous. We can well understand his difficulty, for how could he compile a rule for the promotion of practical virtue when he was at the same time indefatigable in condemning the monkish practices of prayer and meditation, pious observances and penitential exercises, as mere formalities and outgrowths of the theory of holiness-by-works? It was quite in keeping with his leading idea, and his hatred of works, that he should stigmatise the whole outward structure of the Christian life known hitherto as a mere "service of imposture."

"Christ has become to all of us a cloak for our shame."[2]

"Our life and all our doings must not have the honour and glory of making us children of God and obtaining for us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. What is necessary is that you should hear Christ saying to you: "Good morning, dear brother, in Me behold your sin and death vanquished. The law has already been fulfilled, viz. by Christ, so that it is not necessary to fulfil it, but only to hang it by faith around Him who fulfils it, and to become like Him."[3]

"This is the Evangel that brings help and salvation to the conscience in despair. . . . The law with its demands had disheartened, nay, almost slain it, but now comes this sweet and joyful message."[4]

[1] Cp., *ibid.*, p. 279 ff.
[2] Letter to Reissenbusch, March 27, 1525, "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 277; Erl. ed., 53, p. 288 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 145).
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 105.
[4] *Ibid.*

"Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe more boldly still."[1]

*Luther's "Pecca fortiter."*

In what has gone before, that we might the better see how Luther's standard of life compared with his claim to a higher calling, we have reviewed in succession his advice and conduct with regard to one of the principal moral questions of the Christian life, viz. how one is to behave when tempted to despondency and to despair of one's salvation; further, his attitude—theoretical and practical—towards sin, penance and the higher tasks and exercises of Christian virtue. On each several point the ethical defects of his system came to light, in spite of all his efforts to conceal them by appealing to the true freedom of the Christian, to the difference between the law and the Gospel, or to the power of faith in the merits of Christ.

On glancing back at what has been said, we can readily understand why those Catholic contemporaries, who took up the pen against Luther and his followers, directed their attacks by preference on these points of practical morality.

Johann Fabri (i.e. Schmidt) of Heilbronn, who filled the office of preacher at Augsburg Cathedral until he was forced to vacate the pulpit owing to the prohibition issued by the Magistrates against Catholic preaching in 1534, wrote at a later date, in 1553, in his work "The Right Way," of Luther and those preachers who shared his point of view: "The sweet, sugary preachers who encourage the people in their wickedness say: The Lord has suffered for us, good works are unclean and sinful, a good, pious and honest life with fasting, etc., is mere Popery and hypocrisy, the Lord has merited heaven for us and our goodness is all worthless. These and such-like are the sweet, sugary words they preach, crying: Peace, Peace! Heaven has been thrown open, only believe and you are already justified and heirs of heaven. Thus wickedness gets the upper hand, and those things which draw down upon us the wrath of God and rob us of eternal life are regarded as no sin at all. But the end shall prove whether the doctrine is of God, as the fruit shows whether the tree is good. What terror and distress has been caused in Germany by those who boast of the new

[1] See below, p. 196.

Gospel it is easier to bewail than to describe. Ungodliness, horrible sins and vices hold the field; greater and more terrible evil, fear and distress have never before been heard of, let alone seen in Germany."[1]

Matthias Sittardus, from the little town of Sittard in the Duchy of Jülich, a zealous and energetic worker at Aachen, wrote as follows of Luther's exhortations quoted above: "The result is that men say, What does sin matter? Christ took it away on the cross; the evil that I do—for I must sin and cannot avoid it—He is ready to bear; He will answer for it and refrain from imputing it to me; I have only to believe and off it goes like a flash. Good works have actually become a reproach and are exposed to contempt and abuse."[2]—Elsewhere he laments, that "there is much glorying in and boasting of faith," but of "good works and actions little" is seen.[3]

Alluding to man's unfreedom for doing what is good, as advocated by Luther, Johann Mensing, a scholarly and busy popular writer, says: "They [the preachers] call God a sinner and maintain that God does all our sins in us. And when they have sinned most grievously they argue that such was God's Will, and that they could do nothing but by God's Will. They look upon the treachery of Judas, the adultery of David and Peter's denial as being simply the work of God, just as much as the best of good deeds."[4]

The words quoted above: "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe more boldly still," are Luther's own.

The saying, which must not be taken apart from the context, was employed by Luther in a letter to Melanchthon, on August 1, 1521.[5] The writer, who was then at the Wartburg, was engaged

[1] "Der rechte Weg. Welche Weg oder Strass der Glaubig wandeln soll," etc. Dillingen, 1553. The passages are quoted by N. Paulus, "Die deutschen Dominikaner im Kampfe gegen Luther," p. 252.

[2] "Christl. Predigt. an S. Matthei Tag," Mainz, 1557, in Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 168.

[3] "Predigten über die erste Canon. Epistel Johannis," Cologne, 1571. Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 173.

[4] "Vormeldunge der Unwahrheit Lutherscher Clage," Frankfurt a.d. Oder, 1532, Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 33. The three writers above quoted were all Dominicans. Luther's Catholic contemporaries cannot have been acquainted with his "*Pecca ortiter*," otherwise their language would have been even stronger.

[5] "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 208. The letter no longer exists in its entirety. One portion, however, became known and was published by Joh. Aurifaber in 1556 in the first vol. of Luther's letters (p. 343) and

in a "heated struggle"[1] on the question of the Church, and on religious vows, for the setting aside of which he was seeking a ground. At the Wartburg he was, on his own confession, a prey to "temptations and sins,"[2] though in this he only saw the proof that his Evangel would triumph over the devil. The letter is the product of a state of mind, restless, gloomy and exalted, and culminates in a prophetic utterance concerning God's approaching visitation of Germany on account of its persecution of the Evangel.

The passage which at present interests us, taken together with the context, runs thus :

"If you are a preacher of grace, then preach a real, not a fictitious grace ; if your grace is real, then let your sin also be real and not fictitious. God does not save those who merely fancy themselves sinners. Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe more boldly still (' *esto peccator et pecca fortiter, sed fortius fide* ') ; and rejoice in Christ, Who is the conqueror of sin, death and the world ; we must sin as long as we are what we are. This life is not the abode of justice, but we look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, as Peter says. It suffices that by the riches of the glory of God we have come to know the Lamb, Who taketh away the sin of the world ; sin shall not drag us away from Him, even should we commit fornication or murder thousands and thousands of times a day. Do you think that the price and the ransom paid for our sins by this sublime Lamb is so insignificant ? Pray boldly, for you are in truth a very bold sinner."

This is language of the most extravagant paradox. What it really means is very objectionable. Melanchthon is to pray very fervently with the hope of obtaining the Divine assistance against sin, but at the same time he is to sin boldly. This language of the Wartburg is not unlike that in which Luther wrote, from the Castle of Coburg, to his pupil, Hieronymus Weller, when the latter was tempted to despair, to encourage him against the fear of sin (above, p. 175 f.) ; that letter too was written in anguish of spirit and in a state of excitement similar to what he had experienced in the Wartburg. We might, it is true, admit that, in these words Luther gave the rein to his well-known inclination to put things in the strongest light, a tendency to be noticed in some of his other statements quoted above. On the other hand, however, the close connection between the compromising words and his whole system of sin and grace, can scarcely be denied ; we have here something more than a figure of rhetoric. Luther's endeavour was to reassure, once and for all, Melanchthon,

described as "*Fragmentum epistolæ D.M. Lutheri ad Philippum Melanchthonem ex Pathmo scriptæ, a. MDXXI., repertum in bibliotheca Georgii Spalatini.*" Melanchthon had possibly sent the extract to Spalatin when the latter was troubled regarding his own salvation.

[1] (See below.) "*Vides quantis urgear æstibus,*" etc. To Melanchthon, August 3, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 213.

[2] See vol. ii., p. 82 f.

who was so prone to anxiety. The latter shrank from many of the consequences of Luther's doctrines, and at that time was possibly also a prey to apprehension concerning the forgiveness of his own sins. Hence the writer of the letter seeks to convince him that the strength of the fiducial faith preached by himself, Luther, was so great, that no sense of sin need trouble a man. To have "real, not fictitious, sin" to him, means as much as: Be bold enough to look upon yourself as a great sinner; "Be a sinner," means: Do not be afraid of appearing to be a sinner in your own sight; Melanchthon is to be a bold sinner in his own eyes in order that he may be the more ready to ascribe all that is good to the grace which works all. Thus far there is nothing which goes beyond Luther's teaching elsewhere.

The passage is, however, more than a mere paradoxical way of expressing the doctrine dear to him.

Luther, here and throughout the letter, does not say what he ought necessarily to have said to one weighed down by the consciousness of sin; of remorse and compunction we hear nothing whatever, nor does he give due weight and importance to the consciousness of guilt; he misrepresents grace, making it appear as a mere outward, magical charm, by which—according to an expression which cannot but offend every religious mind—a man is justified even though he be a murderer and a libertine a thousand times over. Luther's own words here are perhaps the best refutation of the Lutheran doctrine of Justification, for he speaks of sin, even of the worst, in a way that well lays bare the weaknesses of the system of fiducial faith.

It is unfortunate that Luther should have impressed such a stigma upon his principal doctrine, both in his earliest statements of it, for instance, in his letter to George Spenlein in 1516, and, again, in one of his last epistles to a friend, also tormented by scruples of conscience, viz. George Spalatin.[1]

In the above-mentioned letter to Melanchthon, in which Luther expresses his contempt for sin by the words "*Pecca fortiter*," he is not only encouraging his friend with regard

[1] Passages tallying with the "*Esto peccator*" are to be found elsewhere in Luther's writings. Cp. for instance his letter of 1516 (vol. i., p. 88 f.) to Spenlein, where he says: "*Cave, ne aliquando ad tantam puritatem aspires, ut peccator tibi videri nolis, imo esse. Christus enim nonnisi in peccatoribus habitat. . . . Igitur nonnisi in illo pacem invenies.*" In "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 236 *seq.*, it is likewise explained why one must be a great sinner; he insists that "*credenti omnia sunt auctore Christo possibilia*" and condemns strongly "*affectus propriæ iustitiæ*," until he arrives at the paradox, "*Ideo est peccatum, ut in peccatis apti ad spem simus*" (p. 239). In perfect harmony with such early statements is the letter he wrote towards the end of his life to Spalatin when the latter was sunk in melancholy; here he says: "*Nimis tener hactenus fuisti peccator. . . . Iunge te nobis veris magnis et duris peccatoribus*"; he must, so Christ speaking through Luther tells him, hold alone to faith in the Divine mercy. August 21, 1544, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 680.

to possible sins of the past, but is also thinking of temptations in the future. His advice is: Sin boldly and fearlessly—whereas what one would have expected would have been: Should you fall, don't despair. The underlying idea is: No sin is so detestable as to affright the believer, which is further explained by the wanton phrase: "even should we commit fornication or murder thousands and thousands of times a day."

However much stress we may be disposed to lay on Luther's warnings against sin, and whatever allowance we may make for his rhetoric, still the "*Pecca fortiter*" stands out as the result of his revolt against the traditional view of sin and grace, with which his own doctrine of Justification refused to be reconciled. These inauspicious words are the culmination of Luther's practical ideas on religion, borne witness to by so many of his statements, which, at the cost of morality, give the reins to human freedom and to disorder. Such was the state of mind induced in him by the spirits of the Wartburg, such the enthusiasm which followed his "spiritual baptism" on his "Patmos," that isle of sublime revelations.

Such is the defiance involved in the famous saying that an impartial critic, Johann Adam Möhler, in his "Symbolism" says: "Although too much stress must not be laid on the passage, seeing how overwrought and excited the author was, yet it is characteristic enough and important from the point of view of the history of dogma."[1] G. Barge, in his Life of Carlstadt, says, that Luther in his letter to Melanchthon had reduced "his doctrine of Justification by faith alone to the baldest possible formula."[2] "If Catholic research continues to make this [the '*Pecca fortiter*'] its point of attack, we must honestly admit that there is reason in its choice."

The last words are from Walter Köhler, now at the University of Zürich, a Protestant theologian and historian, who has severely criticised all Luther's opinions on sin and grace.[3]

One of the weak points of Luther's theology lies, according to Köhler,[4] in the "clumsiness of his doctrine of sin and salva-

[1] "Symbolik," § 16, p. 161.

[2] 1, p. 301. Other Protestant writers, such as Carové ("Alleinseligmachende Kirche," 2, p. 434 (see K. A. Hase, "Polemik," [4] p. 267), declared it to be "a downright calumny to say that so shocking a doctrine occurred in a work of Luther's."

[3] "Katholizismus und Reformation," p. 58.

[4] "Ein Wort zu Denifles Luther," Tübingen, 1904. pp. 38–45.

tion." "How, in view of the total corruption of man" (through original sin, absence of free will and loss of all power), can redemption be possible at all unless by some mechanical and supernatural means? Luther says: "By faith alone." But his "faith is something miraculous, in which psychology has no part whatever; the corruption is mechanical and so is the act of grace which removes it." In Luther's doctrine of sin, as Köhler remarks, the will, the instrument by which the process of redemption should be effected, becomes a steed "ridden either by God or by the devil. If the Almighty is the horseman, He throws Satan out of the saddle, and *vice versa;* the steed, however, remains entirely helpless and unable to rid himself of his rider. In such a system Christ, the Redeemer, must appear as a sort of '*deus ex machina*,' who at one blow sets everything right." It would not be so bad, were at least "the Almighty to overthrow Satan. But He remains ever seated in heaven, i.e. Luther never forgets to impress on man again and again that he cannot get out of sin: 'The Saints remain always sinners at heart.'"

Although, proceeds Köhler, better thoughts, yea, even inspiring ones, are to be found in Luther's writings, yet the peculiar doctrines just spoken of were certainly his own, at utter variance though they be with our way of looking at the process of individual salvation, viz. from the psychological point of view, and of emphasising the personal will to be saved. "In spite of Luther's plain and truly evangelical intention of attributing to God alone all the honour of the work of salvation," he was never able "clearly to comprehend the personal, ethico-religious value of faith"; "on the contrary, he makes man to be shifted hither and thither, by the hand of God, like a mere pawn, and in a fashion entirely fatalistic"; "when Christ enters, then, according to him, all is well; I am no longer a sinner, I am set free" ("*iam ego peccatum non habeo et sum liber*")[1];—"but where does the ethical impulse come in?" Seeing that sin is merely covered over, and, as a matter of fact, still remains, man must, according to Luther, "set to work to conquer it without, however, ever being entirely successful in this task, or rather he must strengthen his assurance of salvation, viz. his faith. Such is Luther's ethics." The critic rightly points out, that this "system of ethics is essentially negative," viz. merely directs man how "not to fall" from the "pedestal" on which he is set up together with Christ. Man, by faith, is raised so high, that, as Luther says, "nothing can prejudice his salvation";[2] "Christian freedom means . . . that we stand in no need of any works in order to attain to piety and salvation."[3]

[1] Köhler here quotes Denifle ("Luther," p. 442; ed. 2, p. 465), who gives these words in their full context from Luther's MS. Commentary on Romans. We may point out that Denifle quotes an abundance of similar passages from Luther's works, amongst which those taken from his early Commentary on Romans are particularly interesting.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 27; Erl. ed., 27, p. 185; Köhler, *ibid.*, p. 43 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 25=181=44.

### 3. Luther's Admissions Concerning His own Practice of Virtue

St. Paul, the far-seeing Apostle of the Gentiles, says of the ethical effects of the Gospel and of faith : " Those who are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the lusts thereof. If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit." He instances as the fruits of the Spirit : " Patience, longanimity, goodness, benignity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity " (Gal. v. 22 ff.). Amongst the qualities which must adorn a teacher and guide of the faithful he instances to Timothy the following : " It behoveth him to be blameless, sober, prudent, of good behaviour, chaste, no striker, not quarrelsome ; he must have a good testimony of them that are without, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience " (1 Tim. iii. 2 ff.). Finally he sums up all in the exhortation : " Be thou an example to the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity " (*ibid.*, iv. 12).

It seems not unjust to expect of Luther that his standard of life should be all the higher, since, in opposition to all the teachers of his day and of bygone ages, and whilst professing to preach nought but the doctrine of Christ, he had set up a new system, not merely of faith, but also of morals. At the very least the power of his Evangel should have manifested itself in his own person in an exceptional manner.

How far was this the case ? What was the opinion of his contemporaries and what was his own ?

Catholics were naturally ever disposed to judge Luther's conduct from a standpoint different from that of Luther's own followers. A Catholic, devoted to his Church, regarded as his greatest blemish the conceit of the heresiarch and devastator of the fold ; to him it seemed intolerable that a disobedient and rebellious son of the Church should display such pride as to set himself above her and the belief of antiquity and should attack her so hatefully. As for his morality, his sacrilegious marriage with a virgin dedicated to God, his incessant attacks upon celibacy and religious vows, and his seducing of countless souls to break their most sacred promises, were naturally sufficient to debase him in the eyes of most Catholics.

There were, however, certain questions which both

Catholics and Lutherans could ask and answer impartially: Did Luther possess in any eminent degree the fiducial faith which he represented as so essential? Did this faith produce in him those fruits he extols as its spontaneous result, above all a glad heart at peace with God and man? Further: How far did he himself come up even to that comparatively low standard to which, theoretically, he reduced Christian perfection?

If we seek from Luther's own lips an estimate of his virtues, we shall hear from him many frank statements on the subject.

The first place belongs to what he says of his faith and personal assurance of salvation.

Of faith, he wrote to Melanchthon, who was tormented with doubts and uncertainty: "To you and to us all may God give an increase of faith. . . . If we have no faith in us, why not at least comfort ourselves with the faith that is in others? For there must needs be others who believe instead of us, otherwise there would be no Church left in the world, and Christ would have ceased to be with us till the end of time. If He is not with us, where then is He in the world?"[1]

He complains so frequently of the weakness of his own faith that we are vividly reminded how greatly he himself stood in need of the "consolation" of dwelling on the faith that was in others. He never, it is true, attributes to himself actual unbelief, or a wilful abandon of trust in the promises of Christ, yet he does speak in strangely forcible terms—and with no mere assumed humility or modesty—of the weakness of this faith and of the inconstancy of his trust.

Of the devil, who unsettles him, he says: "Often I am shaken, but not always."[2] To the devil it was given to play the part of torturer. "I prefer the tormentor of the body to the torturer of the soul."[3]—"Alas, the Apostles believed, of this there can be no doubt; I can't believe, and yet I preach faith to others. I

[1] On June 29, 1530, from the fortress of Coburg, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 44. Melanchthon had told Luther his fears and anxieties on account of the impending discussion of the point of faith before the Diet of Augsburg. Luther is encouraging him.

[2] To Melanchthon, June 27, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 35.

[3] In the letter quoted above, n. 1 (p. 43): "*carnificem illum spiritus.*"

know that it is true, yet believe it I cannot."[1] "I know Jonas, and if he [like Christ] were to ascend to heaven and disappear out of our sight, what should I then think? And when Peter said: 'In the name of Jesus, arise' [Acts iii. 6], what a marvel that was! I don't understand it and I can't believe it; and yet all the Apostles believed."[2]

"I have been preaching for these twenty years, and read and written, so that I ought to see my way . . . and yet I cannot grasp the fact, that I must rely on grace alone; and still, otherwise it cannot be, for the mercy-seat alone must count and remain since God has established it; short of this no man can reach God. Hence it is no wonder that others find it so hard to accept faith in its purity, more particularly when these devil-preachers [the Papists] add to the difficulty by such texts as: 'Do this and thou shalt live,' item 'Wilt thou enter into life, keep the commandments' (Luke x. 28; Matthew xix. 17)."[3]

He is unable to find within him that faith which, according to his system, ought to exist, and, in many passages, he even insists on its difficulty in a very curious manner. "Ah, dear child, if only one could believe firmly," he said to his little daughter, who "was speaking of Christ with joyful confidence"; and, in answer to the question, "whether then he did not believe," he replied by praising the innocence and strong faith of children, whose example Christ bids us follow.[4]

In the notes among which these words are preserved there follows a collection of similar statements belonging to various periods: "This argument, 'The just shall live in his faith' (Hab. ii. 4), the devil is unable to explain away. But the point is, who is able to lay hold on it?"[5]—"I, alas, cannot believe as firmly as I can preach, speak and write, and as others fancy I am able to believe."[6]—When the Apostle of the Gentiles speaks of dying daily (1 Cor. xv. 31), this means, so Luther thinks, that he had doubts about his own teaching. In the same way Christ withdraws Himself from him, Luther, "so that at times I say: Truly I know not where I stand, or whether I am preaching aright or not."[7] "I used to believe all that the Pope and the monks said, but now I am unable to believe what Christ says, Who cannot lie. This is an annoying business, but we shall keep it for that [the Last] Day."[8]

"Conscience's greatest consolation," he also says, according to the same notes, "is simply the Lord Christ," and he proceeds to describe in detail this consolation in language of much power, agreeably with his doctrine of Justification. He, however, concludes: "But I cannot grasp this consoling doctrine, I can neither learn it nor bear it in mind."[9]

"I am very wretched owing to the weakness of my faith;

[1] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 98.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 19, p. 325.
[4] *Ibid.*, 58, p. 363 f.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 374.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 380.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 385.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 402.

hardly can I find any comfort in the death and resurrection of Christ, or in the article of the forgiveness of sins. . . . I cannot succeed in laying hold on the essential treasure, viz. the free forgiveness of sins."[1]

"It is a difficult matter to spring straight from my sins to the righteousness of Christ, and to be as certain that Christ's righteousness is mine as I am that my own body is mine. . . . I am astonished that I cannot learn this doctrine."[2]

In a passage already quoted Luther rightly described the task he assigned to grace and faith as something "which affrights a man," for which reason it is "hard for him to believe"; he himself had often, so to speak, to fight his way out of hell, "but it costs much before one obtains consolation."

Such statements we can well understand if we put ourselves in his place. The effects he ascribed to fiducial faith were so difficult of attainment and so opposed to man's natural disposition, that never-ending uncertainty was the result, both in his own case and in that of many others. Moreover, he, or rather his peculiar interpretation of Holy Scripture, was the only guarantee of his doctrine, whereas the Catholic Church took her stand upon the broad and firm basis of a settled, traditional interpretation, and traced back her teaching to an authority instituted by God and equipped with infallibility. In his "temptations of faith," Luther clung to the most varied arguments, dwelling at one time on the fact of his election, at another on the depravity of his opponents, now on the malice of the devil sent to oppose him, now on the supposed advantages of his doctrine, as for instance, that it gave all the honour to God alone and made an end of everything human, even of free will: "Should Satan take advantage of this and ally himself with the flesh and with reason, then conscience becomes affrighted and despairs, unless you resolutely enter into yourself and say: Even should Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, St. Peter, Paul, John, nay, an angel from heaven, teach otherwise, yet I know for a certainty that what I teach is not human but divine, i.e. that I ascribe all to God and nothing to man."[3]

"I do not understand it, I am unable to believe . . . I cannot believe and yet I teach others. I know that it is right and yet believe it I cannot. Sometimes I think: You teach the truth, for you have the office and vocation, you are of assistance to many and glorify Christ; for we do not preach Aristotle or Cæsar, but Jesus Christ. But when I consider my weakness, how I eat and drink and am considered a merry fellow, then I begin to doubt. Alas, if one could only believe!"[4]

"Heretics believe themselves to be holy. I find not a scrap of holiness in myself, but only great weakness. As soon as I am

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Rebenstock, 2, p. 146.
[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 41.
[3] "Comment. in Gal." (1531), ed. Irmischer, 1, p. 102. Cp. above, p. 139, n. 1.
[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 79.

assailed by temptation I understand the Spirit, but nevertheless the flesh resists. [That is] idolatry against the first table [of the law]. Gladly would I be formally just, but I am not conscious of being so."

And Pomeranus replied: "Neither am I conscious of it, Herr Doctor."[1]

Before passing on to some of Luther's statements concerning the consonance of his life with faith, we may remark that there is no lack of creditable passages in his writings on the conforming of ethics to faith. Although here our task is not to depict in its entirety the morality of Luther and his doctrine, but merely to furnish an historical answer to the question whether there existed in him elements which rendered his claim to a higher mission incredible, still we must not forget his many praiseworthy exhortations to virtue, intended, moreover, not merely for others, but also for himself.

That the devil must be resisted and that his tricks and temptations lead to what is evil, has been insisted upon by few preachers so frequently as by Luther, who in almost every address, every chapter of his works, and every letter treats of the sinister power of the devil. Another favourite, more positive theme of his discourses, whether to the members of his household or to the larger circle of the public, was the domestic virtues and the cheerful carrying out of the duties of one's calling. He was also fond, in the sermons he was so indefatigable in preaching, of bringing home to those oppressed with the burden of life's troubles the consolation of certain evangelical truths, and of breaking the bread of the Word to the little ones and the unlearned. With the utmost earnestness he sought to awaken trust in God, resignation to His Providence, hope in His Mercy and Bounty and the confession of our own weakness. One idea on which he was particularly fond of lingering, was, that we must pray because we depend entirely upon God, and that we must put aside all confidence in ourselves in order that we may be filled with His Grace.

Unfortunately such thoughts too often brought him back to his own pet views of man's passivity and absence of free will and the all-effecting power of

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 147 f. We shall treat more fully of Luther's "Temptations" against faith and his inner wavering in vol. v., xxxii.

God. "The game is always won," he cries, "and if it is won there is no longer any pain or trouble more; there is no need to struggle and fight, for all has already been accomplished."[1] "Christ, the Conqueror, has done all, so that there is nothing left for us to do, to root out sin, to slay the devil or to overcome death; they all have been trampled to the ground. . . . The doing was not, however, our work."[2]—"The Christian's work is to sleep and do nothing"; thus does he sum up in one of his sermons the exhortations he had previously given to rest altogether on the merits of Christ; even should a man "fall into sin and be up to the neck in it, let him remember that Christ is no taker, but a most gracious giver"; this is "a very sweet and cheering doctrine; others, it is true, teach that you must do so much for sin, must live in this or that way, since God must be paid to the last farthing before you can appear before Him. Such people make of God a torturer and taskmaster."[3] After having recommended prayer he inveighs against what he calls its abuse: "They say: I will pray until God gives me His Grace; but nothing comes of it, because God says to them: You cannot and never will be able to do anything; but I shall do everything." "Everything through Christ: through works, nothing whatever."[4]

Luther has some remarkable admissions to make, particularly in his private utterances, concerning the manner in which he himself and his chosen circle lived their faith.

"I cannot express in words what great pains I took in the Papacy to be righteous. Now, however, I have ceased entirely

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 50, p. 153. Exposition of John xvi.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 9, p. 407, in a Sermon on Genesis xxviii. Joh. Poliander's Collection.

[4] *Ibid.*, 11, p. 197, Sermon in 1523 from Rörer's notes. Though in the passages just quoted he lays great stress on the fact, that nothing is needed on our part for the obtaining of forgiveness (not even as Catholics taught any co-operation on our part with God's helping grace), yet he speaks here again of the "emptying of the heart of all affection" for creatures, and of the "works" which proceed from a heart that is purified by faith. "Werke," Weim. ed., 9, p. 409. "If you have now the wedding garment, then serve your neighbour, give yourself up to him entirely, take compassion on him. [For] the Christian life consists in faith in God and charity towards our neighbour." *Ibid.*, 12, p. 670, in another set of notes of the sermon just quoted. "First we become brides [of Christ] by faith, and, then, through charity, Christs to every man." *Ibid.*, 11, p. 197.

to be careful, because I have come to the insight and belief that another has become righteous before God in my stead."[1]

"My doctrine stands whatever [my] life may be."[2]

"Let us stick to the true Word that the seat of Moses may be ours. Even should our manner of life not be altogether polished and perfect, yet God is merciful; the laity, however, hate us."[3]

"Neither would it be a good thing were we to do all that God commands, for in that case He would be cheated of His Godhead, and the Our Father, faith, the article of the forgiveness of sins, etc., would all go to ruin. God would be made a liar. He would no longer be the one and only truth, and every man would not be a liar [as Scripture says]. Should any man say: 'If this is so, God will be but little served on earth' [I reply]: He is accustomed to that; He wills to be, and is, a God of great mercy."[4]

"I want to hand over a downright sinner to the Judgment Seat of our Lord God; for though I myself may not have actually been guilty of adultery, still that has not been for lack of goodwill."[5]—The latter phrase was a saying of the populace, and does not in the least mean that he ever really had the intention of committing the sin.

"I confess of myself," he says in a sermon in 1532, "and doubtless others must admit the same [of themselves], that I lack the diligence and earnestness of which really I ought to have much more than formerly; that I am much more careless than I was under the Papacy; and that now, under the Evangel, there is nowhere the same zeal to be found as before." This he declares to be due to the devil and to people's carelessness, but not to his teaching.[6]

On other occasions he admits of his party as a whole, more particularly of its leaders, viz. the theologians and Princes, that they fell more or less short of what was required for a Christian life; among them he expressly includes himself: "It is certain with regard to ourselves and our Princes that we are not clean and holy, and the Princes have vices of their own. But Christ loves a frank and downright confession."[7]

Among such "confessions" made by Luther we find some concerning prayer.

Comparing the present with the past he says: "People are now so cold and pray so seldom"; this he seeks to explain by urging that formerly people were more "tormented by the devil."[8] A better explanation is that which he gave in his

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 42.
[2] Veit Dietrich, in Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 139.
[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 179.
[4] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 209.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 238.
[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., $18^2$, p. 353.
[7] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 115.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

Commentary on Galatians : " For the more confident we are of the freedom Christ has won for us, the colder and lazier we are in teaching the Word, praying, doing good and enduring contradictions."[1]

We possess some very remarkable and even spirited exhortations to prayer from Luther's pen ; on occasion he would also raise his own voice in prayer to implore God's assistance with feeling, fervour and the greatest confidence, particularly when in anxiety and trouble about his undertaking. (See vol. iv., xxv. 3.) He refers frequently to his daily prayer, though he admits that the heretics, i.e. the Anabaptists, also were in the habit of praying—in their own way. His excessive labours and the turmoil of his life's struggle left him, however, little time and quiet for prayer, particularly for interior prayer. Besides, he considered the canonical hours of the Catholics mere " bawling," and the liturgical devices for raising the heart mere imposture. During the latter years he spent in the cloister outside cares left him no leisure for the prayers which he was, as a religious, bound to recite. Finally, towards the end of his life, he often enough admits that his prayers were cold.[2] Frequently he was obliged to stimulate his ardour for prayer as well as work by " anger and zeal " ;[3] " for no man can say," as he puts it, " how hard a thing it is to pray from the heart."[4]

Even in the early part of his career he had deliberately and on principle excluded one important sort of prayer, viz. prayer for help in such interior trials as temptations against the celibacy enjoined by the religious state, which he came to persuade himself was an impossibility and contrary to the Will of God. Then, if ever, did he stand in need of the weapon of prayer, but we read nowhere in his letters, written in that gloomy period, of his imploring God humbly for light and strength. On the contrary, he writes, in 1521 : " What if this prayer is not according to God's Will, or if He does not choose to grant it when it is addressed to Him ? "[5] He ironically attacks those who rightly said that " we must implore in all things the grace of God, that He denies it to none," and, that, with God's grace, it was possible to keep the vows. He replies to " these simple people and those who care nothing for souls " : " Excellent ! Why did you not advise St. Peter to ask God that he might not be bound by Herod ? " " That," he says, " is to make a mockery of serious matters " (" *est modus ludendi* ")[6]—a censure which might very well have been flung back at such a teacher of prayer.

Seventeen years later he gave the following advice on prayer : " We must not curse, that is true, but pray we must that God's

[1] " Comment. in Gal.," ed. Irmischer, 2, p. 351.
[2] " Briefe.," ed. De Wette, 5, pp. 515, 566.
[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 428 f.
[4] Mathesius, " Aufzeichnungen," p. 178.
[5] " Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 631 ; " Opp. lat. var.," 6, p. 321, " *De votis monasticis*," 1521.
[6] *Ibid.*

name be hallowed and honoured, and the Pope's execrated and cursed together with his god, the devil; that God's Kingdom come, and that End-Christ's kingdom perish. Such a 'paternosteral' curse may well be breathed, and so should every Christian pray."[1] That the Pope be "cursed, damned, dishonoured and destroyed, etc.," such was his "daily, never-ending, heartfelt prayer, as it was of all those who believe in Christ," so he assures us, "and I feel that my prayer is heard."[2] His opinion is that it is impossible to pray for anything without "cursing," i.e. excluding the opposite. "Someone asked Dr. Martin Luther whether he who prayed thus must curse. 'Yes,' he replied, 'for when I pray "Hallowed be Thy Name," I curse Erasmus and all heretics who dishonour and blaspheme God.'"[3] His anger against the devil often broke out in his prayers. "Though I cannot read or write," he writes to Melanchthon from the Coburg, "I can still think, and pray, and rage ('*debacchari*') against the devil."[4]

He ought to "offer incense to God," he complains on one occasion in 1538 in his "Table-Talk," but, instead, he brings Him "stinking pitch and devil's ordure by his murmuring and impatience." "It is thus that I frequently worship my God. . . . Had we not the article of the forgiveness of sins, which God has firmly promised, our case would indeed be bad."[5] Again and again does he cast his anchor on this article when threatened by the storms.

His private, non-polemical religious exercises seem to have been exceedingly brief: "I have to do violence to myself daily in order to pray, and I am satisfied to repeat, when I go to bed, the Ten Commandments, the Our Father and then a verse or two; while thinking these over I fall asleep."[6] Unusual, and at the same time peculiar, were the prayers which we hear of his offering with the intention of doing some wholesome ill to his neighbour, or even of bringing about the latter's death in the interests of the Evangel. In a sermon on July 23, 1531, after reprimanding certain Wittenberg brewers, who, in the hope of adding to their profits, were accustomed to adulterate their beer, he says:

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 254 f. "Rathschlag von der Kirche," 1538.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 470; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 128, at the close of "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen," 1531. Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 423.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 59, p. 22, "Tischreden."

[4] Letter of July 31, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 157.

[5] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 49.

[6] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 294. Noted in the winter of 1542–3 by Heydenreich.

"Unless you mend your ways, we shall pray that your malt may turn to muck and sewage. Don't forget that."[1]

The Christian's life of faith ought not merely to be penetrated with the spirit of prayer but, in spite of all crosses and the temptations from earthy things, to move along the safe path of peace and joy of heart. Luther must have found much concerning "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" in his favourite Epistle to the Romans. He himself says: "A Christian must be a joyful man. . . . Christ says, 'Peace be with you; let not your heart be troubled: have confidence, I have overcome the world.' It is the will of God that you be joyful."

Of himself, however, he is forced to add: "I preach and write this, but I have not yet acquired the art when tempted the other way. This is in order that we may be instructed," so he reassures himself. "Were we always at peace, the devil would get the better of us. . . . The fact is we are not equal to the holy Fathers in the matter of faith. The further we fall short of them [this is another of his consolations], the greater is the victory Christ will win; for in the struggle with the devil we are the meanest, most stupid of foes, and he has a great advantage over us. . . . Our Lord has determined to bring about the end [the impending end of all] amidst universal foolishness."[2] Thus, according to him, the victory of Christ would be exalted all the more by the absence of peace and joy amongst His followers.

What do we see of pious effort on his part, more particularly in the matter of preparation for the sacraments, and repressing of self?

The spiritual life was to him a passive compliance with

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 34, 2, p. 21. Certain prayers spoken by Luther at critical moments, which appear in Protestant biographies, more particularly the older ones, are purely legendary. So, for instance, his solemn prayer at Worms: "O God, my God, stand by me against all the wit and wisdom of the world," etc. (Uckert, "Luthers Leben," 2, Gotha, 1817, p. 6, and also in Walch's edition of Luther's Works, 10, p. 1720). From Melanchthon's time (*ibid.*, 21, Nachl. 354) and that of such enthusiastic pupils of Luther as Spangenberg, it became the custom to extol Luther as a man of prayer. Spangenberg even declares that "no one can deny" that Luther during his lifetime "checked and prevented God's chastisements, wars and desolation" by means of his "Christian prayers, so full of faith." See Preface to his "Lutherus Theander," No. 18. A certain Protestant theological periodical assured its readers quite recently, that "Luther spent three hours of his working day in prayer"; it is true that people pray even in the Roman Church, but amid much "superficiality and desecration."

[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 73 f. (Khummer).

the faith which God Himself was to awaken and preserve in the heart.

For "this is how it takes place," he says, in a carefully considered instruction, "God's Word comes to me without any co-operation on my part. I may, it is true, do this much, go and hear it, read it, or preach it, so that it may sink into my heart. And this is the real preparation which lies not in man's powers and ability, but in the power of God. Hence there is no better preparation on our part for all the sacraments than to suffer God to work in us. This is a brief account of the preparation."[1]

Yet he himself perceived the peril of teaching that "those people were fit to receive the sacrament whose hearts had been touched by the Word of God so that they believed, and that whoever did not feel himself thus moved should remain away." He says: "I remark in many, myself included, how the evil spirit, by insisting too much upon the right side, makes people lazy and slow to receive the sacrament, and that they refuse to come unless they feel assured that their faith has been enkindled. This also is dangerous."

Nevertheless he will have no "self-preparation"; such preparation, "by means of one's own works," appeared to him Popish; it was loathsome to God, and the doctrine of "faith alone" should be retained, even though "reason be unable to understand it."[2] Hence it is not surprising that he declared it to be a dreadful "error and abuse" that we should venture to prepare ourselves for the sacrament by our own efforts, as those do who strive to make themselves worthy to receive the sacrament by confession and other works."[3]

He storms at those priests who require contrition from the sinner who makes his confession; his opinion is that they are mad, and that, instead of the keys, they were better able to wield pitchforks.[4] Even "were Christ Himself to come and speak to you as He did to Moses and say, 'What hast thou done?' kill Him on the spot."[5] "Contrition only gives rise to despair, and insults God more than it appeases Him."[6] Such language may be explained by the fact, that, in his theory, contrition is merely consternation and terror at God's wrath produced by the accusations of the law; the troubled soul ought really to take refuge behind the Gospel.—How entirely different had been the preparation recommended by the Church in previous ages for the reception of the sacraments! She indeed enjoined contrition, but as an interior act issuing in love and leading to the cleansing of the

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $11^2$, p. 245, in the Sermon for Easter Monday, 1525.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 243 f. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 4, p. 658.

[5] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 207.

[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 630 f.; "Opp. lat. var.," 1, p. 378 *seq.* in Concl., 3 *seq.* (of 1518). Passages in which he advocates contrition will, however, be quoted below. Cp. vol. i., p. 293.

soul. According to Luther, however, excessive purity of soul was not advisable, and only led to presumption. "The devil is a holy fellow," he had said, "and has no need of Christ and His Grace"; "Christ dwells only in sinners."

On the other hand, in many fine passages, he recommends self-denial and mortification as a check upon concupiscence. He even uses the word "*mortificare*," and insists that, till our last breath, we must not cease to dread the "*fomes*" of the flesh and dishonourable temptations. He alone walks safely, so he repeatedly affirms, who keeps his passions under the dominion of the Spirit, suffers injustice, resists the attacks of pride, and at the same time holds his body in honour as the chaste temple of God by denying it much that its evil lusts desire.

Luther himself, however, does not seem to have been overmuch given to mortification, whether of the senses or of the inner man. He was less notable for his earnest efforts to restrain the passions than for that "openness to all the world had to offer," and that "readiness to taste to the full the joy of living," which his followers admire. Not only was he averse to penitential exercises, but he even refused to regulate his diet: "I eat just what I like and bear the pains afterwards as best I can." "To live by the doctor's rule is to live wretchedly." "I cannot comply with the precautions necessary to ensure health; later on, remedies may do what they can."[1] "I don't consult the doctors, for I don't mean to embitter the one year of life which they allow me, and I prefer to eat and drink in God's name what I fancy."[2] With his reference to his "tippling" and the "Good drink" we shall deal at greater length below, in section 5.

The aim of Luther's ethics, as is plain from the above, did not rise above the level of mediocrity. His practice, to judge from what has been already said, involved the renunciation of any effort after the attainment of eminent virtue. It may, however, be questioned whether he was really true even to the low standard he set himself.

There is a certain downward tendency in the system of mediocrity which drags one ever lower. Such a system carries with it the rejection of all effort to become ever more and more pleasing to God, such as religion must necessarily foster if it is to realise its vocation, and to which those countless souls who were capable of higher things have, under the influence of Divine grace, ever owed their progress. The indispensable and noblest dowry of true piety is the moulding of spiritual heroes, of men capable of overcoming the world and all material things. Thousands of less highly

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," pp. 33, 51.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 435 ("Tischreden").

endowed souls, under the impulse from above, hasten to follow them, seeking the glory of God, and comfort amidst the troubles of life, in religion and the zealous practice of virtue. Mighty indeed, when transformed by them into glowing deeds, were the watchwords of the Church's Saints: "I was born for higher things," "All for the greater glory of God," "Conquer thyself," "Suffer and fight with courage and confidence."

On the other hand, the system of mediocrity, organised yielding to weakness, and the setting up of the lowest possible ethical standard, could not be expected to furnish Luther and his disciples with any very high religious motive. Even in the ordinary domain of Christian life Luther's too easy and over-confident doctrine of the appropriation of the satisfaction made by Christ, sounds very different from our Saviour's exhortations: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; "Whoever will come after Me, let him deny himself"; "Whoever does not take up his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple"; or from those of St. Paul who said of himself, that the world was crucified to him and he to the world; or from those of St. Peter: "Seeing that Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the like mind." "Do penance and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." What Scripture requires of the faithful is not blind, mechanical confidence in the merits of Christ as a cloak for our sins, but "fruits worthy of penance." In the long list of Luther's works we seek in vain for a commentary which brings these solemn statements on penance before the mind of the reader with the emphasis hitherto habitual. Even were such a commentary forthcoming, the living commentary of his own life, which is the seal of the preacher's words, would still be wanting.

On another point, viz. zeal for the souls of others, we see no less clearly how far Luther was removed from the ideal. True zeal for souls embraces all without exception, more particularly those who have gone astray and who must be brought to see the light and to be saved. Luther, on the other hand, again and again restricts most curiously the circle to whom his Evangel is to be preached; the wide outlook of the great preachers of the faith in the Church of olden days was not his.

"Three classes do not belong to the Evangel at all," he had said, "and to them we do not preach. . . . Away with the dissolute swine." The three classes thus stigmatised were, first the "rude hearts," who "will not accept the Evangel nor observe its behests"; secondly, "coarse knaves steeped in great vices," who would not allow themselves to be bitten by the Evangel; thirdly, "the worst of all, who, beyond this, even dare to persecute the Evangel." The Evangel is, as a matter of fact, intended only for "simple souls . . . and to none other have we preached."[1] This explains why Luther long cherished the idea of forming a kind of esoteric Church, or community consisting simply of religiously disposed faithful; unfortunately "he did not find such people,"[2] for most were content to neglect both Church and Sacraments.

The older Church had exhorted all who held a cure of souls to be zealous in seeking out such as had become careless or hostile. When, however, someone asked Luther, in 1540, how to behave towards those who had never been inside a church for about twenty years, he replied: "Let them go to the devil, and, when they die, pitch them on the manure-heap."

The zeal for souls displayed by Luther was zeal for his own peculiar undertaking, viz. for the Evangel which he preached. Zeal for the general spread of the kingdom of God amongst the faithful, and amongst those still sunk in unbelief, was with him a very secondary consideration.

In reality his zeal was almost exclusively directed against the Papacy.

The idea of a universal Church, which just then was inspiring Catholics to undertake the enormous missionary task of converting the newly discovered continents, stood, in Luther's case, very much in the background.

Though, in part, this may be explained by his struggle for the introduction of the innovations into those portions of Germany nearest to him, yet the real reason was his surrender of the old ecclesiastical ideal, his transformation of the Church into an invisible kingdom of souls devoted to the Evangel, and his destruction of the older conception of Christendom with its two hinges, viz. the Papacy established for the spiritual and the Empire for the temporal welfare of the family of nations. He saw little beyond Saxony, the land favoured by the preaching of the new Gospel, and Germany, to which he had been sent as a "prophet." The Middle Ages, though so poor in means of communication and geographical knowledge, compared with that age of dis-

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $11^2$, p. 245 f. Cp. p. 210, n. 1.
[2] Above, p. 24 ff. and vol. v., xxix. 8.

covery, was, thanks to its great Catholic, i.e. world-embracing ideas, inspired with an enthusiasm for the kingdom of God which found no place in the ideals of Lutheranism. We may compare, for instance, the heroic efforts of those earlier days to stem the incursions of the Eastern infidel with the opinion expressed by the Wittenberg professor on the war against the Crescent, where he declared the resistance offered in the name of Christendom to the Turks to be "contrary to the will of the Holy Ghost," an opinion which he continued to hold, in spite of, or perhaps rather because of, its condemnation by the Pope (p. 76 ff., and p. 92). We may contrast the eloquent appeals of the preachers of the Crusades—inspired by the danger which threatened from the East—for the delivery of the Holy Land and the Holy Sepulchre, with Luther's statement quoted above, that God troubled as little about the Tomb at Jerusalem as He did about the Swiss cows (p. 168). In Luther's thoughts the boundaries of the Christian world have suddenly become much less extensive than in the Middle Ages, whilst ecclesiastical interests, thanks to the new territorial rights of the Princes, tend to be limited by the frontiers of the petty States.[1]

The stormy nature of the work on which his energies were spent could not fail to impress on his personal character a stamp of its own. In considering Luther's ethical peculiarities, we are not at liberty to pass over in silence the feverish unrest—so characteristic of him and so unlike the calm and joyous determination evinced by true messengers sent by God—the blind and raging vehemence, which not only suited the violence of his natural disposition, but which he constantly fostered by his actions. "The Lord is not in the storm"; these words, found in the history of the Prophet Elias, do not seem to have been Luther's subject of meditation. He himself, characteristically enough, speaks of his life-work as one long "tally-ho." He was never content save when worrying others or being worried himself; he

[1] Cp. G. Kawerau, "Warum fehlte der deutschen evang. Kirche des 16. u. 17. Jahrh. das volle Verständnis für d. Missionsgedanken der H. Schrift? Vortrag," Breslau, 1896. The author says that "none of the reformers" found in Holy Scripture the duty of missionary effort on the part of Christendom; an exception must, however, be made in the case of Bucer. See N. P(aulus) in the "Hist. Jahrb.," 18, 1897, p. 199.

always required some object which he could pull to pieces, whereas true men of God are accustomed to proceed quietly, according to a fixed plan, and in the light of some great supernatural principle. With Luther excitement, confusion and war were a second nature. "The anger and rage of my enemies is my joy and delight, in spite of all their attempts to take it from me and defraud me of it. . . . To hell-fire with such flowers and fruits, for that is where they belong!"[1]

If, after listening to utterances such as the above, we proceed to visit Luther in his domestic circle—as we shall in the next section—we may well be surprised at the totally different impression given by the man. In the midst of his own people Luther appears in a much more peaceable guise.

He sought to fulfil his various duties as father of the family, towards his children, the servants and the numerous guests who lived in or frequented his house, whether relatives or others, so far as his occupations permitted. He was affable in his intercourse with them, sympathetic, benevolent and kind-hearted towards those who required his help, and easily satisfied with his material circumstances. All these and many other redeeming points in his character will be treated of more in detail later. It is true that the ceaseless labours to which he gave himself up caused him to overlook many abuses at his home which were apparent to others.

The unrest, noise and bustle which reigned in Luther's house, were, at a later date, objected to by many outsiders. George Held wrote in 1542 to George of Anhalt, who had thought of taking up his abode with Luther, to dissuade him from doing so: "Luther's house is tenanted by a miscellaneous crowd ('*miscellanea et promiscua turba*') of students, girls, widows, old women and beardless boys, hence great unrest prevails there; many good men are distressed at this on account of the Reverend Father [Luther]. Were all animated by Luther's spirit, then his house would prove a comfortable and pleasant abode for you for a few days, and you would have an opportunity of enjoying his familiar discourses, but, seeing how his house is at present conducted, I would not advise you to take up your quarters there."[2]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 33; Erl. ed., 30, p. 9. "Against the King of England," 1527.

[2] Letter of February 23, 1542, in Kolde, "Anal. Lutherana," p. 378.

Many of Luther's friends and acquaintances were also dissatisfied with Catherine Bora, because of a certain sway she seemed to exercise over Luther, even outside the family circle, in matters both great and small. In a passage which was not made public until 1907 we find Johann Agricola congratulating himself, in 1544, on Luther's favourable disposition towards him: "Domina Ketha, the arbitress of Heaven and Earth, who rules her husband as she pleases, has, for once, put in a good word on my behalf."[1] The assertion of Caspar Cruciger, a friend of the family, where he speaks of Catherine as the "firebrand in the house," and also the report given to the Elector by the Chancellor Brück, who accuses her of a domineering spirit, were already known before.[2] Luther's own admissions, to which we shall return later, plainly show that there was some truth in these complaints. The latest Protestant to write the life of Catherine Bora, after pointing out that she was vivacious, garrulous and full of hatred for her husband's enemies, says: "The influence of such a temperament, united with such strength of character, could not fail to be evil rather than good, and for this both wife and husband suffered. . . . We cannot but allow that Katey at times exerted a powerful influence over Luther." Particularly in moving him in the direction in which he was already leaning, "her power over him was great."[3]

Luther's son Hans was long a trial to the family, and his father occasionally vents his ire on the youth for his disobedience and laziness. He finally sent him to Torgau, where he might be more carefully trained and have his behaviour corrected. Hans seems to have been spoilt by his mother. Later on she spoke of him as untalented, and as a "silly fellow," who would be laughed at were he to enter the Chancery of the Elector."[4] A niece, Magdalene Kaufmann, whom Luther brought up in his house together with two other young relatives,[5] was courted by Veit Dietrich, one of Luther's pupils, who also boarded with him. This was, however, discountenanced by the master of the house, who declared that the wench "was not yet sufficiently educated." Luther was annoyed at her want of obedience and ended by telling her that, should she not prove more tractable, he would marry her to a "grimy charcoal-burner." His opposition to the match with Dietrich brought about strained relations between himself and one who had hitherto been entirely devoted to him. Dietrich eventually found another partner and was congratulated by Luther. Magdalene, with Luther's consent, married, first, Ambrose Berndt, an official of the University, and, after his death in 1541, accepted the proposal of Reuchlin, a young physician only twenty years of age, whom she married in spite

[1] "Theol. Studien und Kritiken," 1907, p. 246 f. Art. by E. Thiele on some Notes of Joh. Agricola's in a Hebrew Bible at Wernigerode.
[2] "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 313 *seq.* The passage will be given later.
[3] G. Kroker, "Katharina von Bora," Leipzig, 1906, p. 282.
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 484.
[5] See Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 2.

of Luther's displeasure. With her restlessness she had sorely troubled the peace of the household.[1]

Other complaints were due to the behaviour of Hans Polner, the son of Luther's sister, who was studying theology, but who nevertheless frequently returned home the worse for drink and was given to breaking out into acts of violence.[2] Another nephew, Fabian Kaufmann, seems to have been the culprit who caused Luther to grumble that someone in his own house had been secretly betrothed at the very time when, in his bitter controversy with the lawyers, he was denouncing such "clandestine marriages" as invalid.[3] Finally, one of the servant-girls, named Rosina, gave great scandal by her conduct, concerning which Luther has some strong things to say in his letters.[4]

The quondam Augustinian priory at Wittenberg, which has often been praised as the ideal of a Protestant parsonage, fell considerably short, in point of fact, even of Luther's own standard. There lacked the supervision demanded by the freedom accorded to the numerous inmates, whether relatives or boarders, of the famous "Black monastery."

### 4. The Table-Talk and the First Notes of the same

At the social gatherings of his friends and pupils, Luther was fond of giving himself up unrestrainedly to mirth and jollity. His genius, loquacity and good-humour made him a "merry boon companion," whose society was much appreciated. Often, it is true, he was very quiet and thoughtful. His guests little guessed, nay, perhaps he himself was not fully aware, how often his cheerfulness and lively sallies were due to the desire to repress thereby the sad and anxious thoughts which troubled him.

Liveliness and versatility, imagination and inventiveness, a good memory and a facile tongue were some of the gifts with which nature had endowed him. To these already excellent qualities must be added that depth of feeling which frequently finds expression in utterances of surprising beauty interspersed among his more profane sayings. Unfortunately, owing to his incessant conflicts and to the trivialities to which his pen and tongue were so prone, this better side of his character did not emerge as fully as it deserved.

In order to become better acquainted with the conditions

[1] Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 10, p. 286. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 485 *seq.* Rebenstock, 2, p. 20.

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 141.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 569.

[4] On this girl, see below, p. 280 f.

amid which Luther lived at Wittenberg, we must betake ourselves to a room in the former Augustinian convent, where we shall find him seated, after the evening meal, amidst friends such as Melanchthon, Bugenhagen and Jonas, surrounded by eager students—for the most part boarders in his house, the former "Black monastery"—and strangers who had travelled to the little University town attracted by the fame of the Evangel. There it is that he imparts his views and relates his interior experiences in all confidence. He was perfectly aware that what he said was being noted down, and sometimes suggested that one saying or the other should be carefully committed to writing.[1] The older group of friends (1529–1535), to whom we owe relations of the Table-Talk, comprised Conrad Cordatus, Veit Dietrich, Johann Schlaginhaufen, Anton Lauterbach, Hieronymus Weller and Anton Corvinus; such of these as remained with him from 1536 to 1539 form the middle group; the last (1540–1546) was chiefly made up of Johann Mathesius, Caspar Heydenreich, Hieronymus Besold, Master Plato, Johann Stoltz and Johann Aurifaber. Apart from these there were a few who came into close, personal contact with Luther, for instance, George Rörer, who assisted him in translating the Bible and who is one of Aurifaber's authorities for the Table-Talk.[2]

[1] E.g. Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichn.," p. 82.

[2] For biographical data concerning these, see Kroker, "Luthers Tischreden in der Mathesischen Sammlung," Einl., p. 8 ff. For Rörer's Collections of the Table-talk, etc., cp. G. Koffmane, "Die hds. Überlieferung von Werken Luthers," 1907, p. xviii. ff., and Kroker, "Rörers Handschriftenbände und Luthers Tischreden" ("Archiv. f. Reformationsgesch," 5, 1908, p. 337 ff., and 7, 1910, p. 57 ff.). Among the occasional guests was Ch. Gross, Magistrate at Wittenberg, who is mentioned in Luther's letters (De Wette, 5, p. 410) in 1541 as "*praefectus noster.*" In his Catholic days the last had served for three years as one of the bearers of the Pope's sedan; a great traveller, he was noted as an excellent conversationalist and a thorough man of the world. There can be no doubt that he reported to Luther many of the malicious and unveracious tales current of Roman morals, which the latter made use of in his attacks on Popery. Cp. with regard to him "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 424, and 1, p. 372 (where accounts, probably by him, follow), "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 431 ("Tischreden"). He makes unseemly jests on the Latin word for "art," and it appears highly probable that he was the "M. Christo," whom we meet with in Kroker, p. 175, n. 287, in Luther's Table-Talk of 1540, whose "*calida natura*" is mentioned in excuse of a love affair. This gives an answer to Kroker's question: "Who is this Magister Christophorus?" We learn from Bindseil's "Colloquia" that Christopher Gross was anxious to become a widower because his wife was a "*vetula.*"

In his twelfth Sermon on the "Historien von des ehrwürdigen . . . Manns Gottes Martini Lutheri," etc., Mathesius was later on to write that he had enjoyed at his table "many good colloquies and chats" and had tasted "much excellent stuff in the shape of writings and counsels."[1] Luther himself refers incidentally to these social evenings in his famous saying, that, while he "drank Wittenberg beer with his friends Philip and Amsdorf," God, by his means, had weakened the Papacy and brought it nigh to destruction.[2] The wine was drunk—at least on solemn occasions—from the famous bowl known as the "Catechismusglas," on which were painted in sections, placed one below the other and separated by three ridges, various portions of Christian doctrine: at the top the Ten Commandments, in the middle the Creed and Our Father, and at the bottom the whole Catechism (probably the superscriptions and numbers of the questions in the Catechism). We read in the Table-Talk, that, on one occasion, Johann Agricola could get only as far as the Ten Commandments at one draught, whereas Luther was able to empty the bowl right off down to the very dregs, i.e. "Catechism and all."[3]

For Luther's sayings given in what follows we have made use of the so-called original versions of the Table-Talk recently edited by various Protestant scholars, viz. the Diaries of Lauterbach and Cordatus, the notes of Schlaginhaufen and the Collections made by Mathesius and found in the "Aufzeichnungen" edited by Loesche and in the "Tischreden (Mathesius)" published more recently still by Kroker, the Leipzig librarian.[4]

[1] "Historien," Nuremberg, 1566, p. 139.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 3, p. 18; Erl. ed., 28, p. 260. The passage was omitted in the later Luther editions; cp. *ibid.*, p. 18=219 f.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 337.

[4] For the full titles of the publications referred to here and elsewhere under an abbreviated form as "Tagebuch," "Aufzeichnungen," etc., see the Bibliography at the commencement of vol. i. of the present work. Besides these collections heed must be paid to the old German Table-Talk in the Erlangen edition ("Werke," 57–62) and the Latin Table-Talk in Bindseil. Only exceptionally do we quote the other editions, such as the Latin one by Rebenstock, and the older and more recent German editions of Förstemann and Bindseil. Moreover, the Table-Talk in most cases merely serves to prove that this or that idea was expressed more or less in the language recorded, not that Luther actually uttered every word of it. The historical circumstances under which the words were uttered are in most cases unknown. Kroker's

The objection has frequently been raised that the Table-Talk ought not to be made use of as a reliable source of information for the delineation of Luther's person. It is, however, remarkable that the chapters which are favourable to Luther are referred to and exploited in Protestant histories, only that which is disagreeable being usually excluded as historically inaccurate. The fact is that we have merely to comply conscientiously with the rules of historical criticism when utilising the information contained in the Table-Talk, which, owing to its fulness and variety, never fails to rivet attention. These rules suggest that we should give the preference to those statements which recur frequently under a similar form; that we should not take mere questions, put forward by Luther simply to invite discussion and correction, as conveying his real thought; that we consult the original notes, if possible those made at the time of the conversation, and that, where there is a discrepancy between the accounts (a rare occurrence), we should prefer those which date from before the time when Luther's pupils arranged and classified his sayings according to subjects. The chronological arrangement of Luther's sayings has thereby suffered, and here and there the text has been altered. For this reason the Latin tradition, as we have it, for instance, from Lauterbach's pen,[1] ranks before the German version, which is of slightly later date. Kroker's new edition, when complete, promises to be the best.

If the rules of historical criticism are followed in this and other points there is no reason why the historian should not thankfully avail himself of this great fount of information, which the first collectors themselves extolled as the most valuable authority on the spirit of their master "of pious and holy memory,"[2] and as likely to prove both instructive and edifying to a later generation. The doubt

publication has been of great service in determining the dates of the various collections. As regards the present position of the investigation of the sources whence the Table-Talk is derived, see Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, pp. 479-481, and P. Smith, "Luther's Table-Talk," New York, 1907, which sums up the results arrived at in Germany.

[1] Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. xxxxviii. *seq.*, and Kroker, p. 9.

[2] See the title of Rebenstock's Collection. Rebenstock's assurance that, in his Collection he sought nothing but the honour of God and had not introduced any extraneous matter, is reprinted in Bindseil, 1, p. lii.

as to the reliability of the notes has been well answered by Kroker: "Such distrust, so far as the original documents are concerned, can now no longer stand. In his rendering of Luther's words Mathesius, and likewise Heydenreich, Besold and Weller, whose notes his Collection also embodies, does not differ substantially from the older table companions, Dietrich, Schlaginhaufen and Lauterbach. All these men did their utmost to render Luther's sayings faithfully and to the best of their knowledge and ability."[1]

The spontaneous character of the Table-Talk gives it a peculiar value of its own. "These [conversations] are children of the passing moment, reliable witnesses to the prevailing mood" (Adolf Hausrath). In intercourse with intimates our ideas and feelings express themselves much more spontaneously and naturally than where the pen of the letter-writer is being guided by reflection, and seeks to make a certain impression on the mind of his reader. But if even letters are no faithful index to our thought, how much less so are prints, intended for the perusal of thousands and even to outlive the writer's age? On the other hand, it is true that the deliberation which accompanies the use of the pen, imparts, in a certain sense, to the written word a higher value than is possessed by the spoken word. We should, however, expect to find in a man occupying such a position as Luther's a standard sufficiently high to ensure the presence of deliberation and judgment even in ordinary conversation.

Among the valuable statements made by Luther, which on account of their very nature were unsuited for public utterance but have been faithfully transmitted in the Table-Talk, we have, for instance, certain criticisms of friends and even patrons in high places. Such reflections could not well be uttered save in the privacy of his domestic circle, but, for this very reason, they may well be prized by the historian. Then we have his candid admissions concerning himself, for instance, that his fear lest the Landgrave of Hesse should fall away from the cause of the Evangel constituted one of the motives which led him to sanction this Prince's bigamy. Then, again, there is the account of his mental trouble, due to certain external events, of the influence of biblical passages, old memories, etc. Finally, we have his strange counsels concerning resistance to temptation, his

[1] Page 64.

own example held up as a consolation to the faint-hearted, to those who wavered in the faith or were inclined to despair; his excuse for a "good drink," his curious recipe for counteracting the evil done by witches at home, and many other statements of an intimate nature which were quite unsuitable for public writings or even for letters. All this, and much more, offers the unprejudiced observer an opportunity for knowing Luther better. It is true that all is not the Word of God; this Luther himself states in a passage which has been wrongly brought forward in excuse of the Table-Talk: "I must admit that I say many things which are not the Word of God, when speaking outside my office of preacher, at home at meals, or elsewhere and at other times."[1]

The value of the Table-Talk (always assuming the use of the oldest and authentic version) is enhanced if we take into consideration the attitude assumed with regard to it by learned Protestant writers of earlier times. As an instance of a certain type we may take Walch, the scholarly editor of the important Jena edition of Luther's works prized even to-day.[2] He was much annoyed at the publication of the Table-Talk, just because it furnished abundant material for a delineation of Luther, i.e. for that very reason for which it is esteemed by the modern historian. It was unjust, he says, and "quite wrong to reveal what ought to have been buried in silence, to say nothing of the opportunity thus afforded the Papists for abuse and calumny of Luther's person and life." At most—he continues in a tone in which no present-day historian would dare to speak—mere "selections" from the Table-Talk "which could give no offence" ought to have been published, but thus to bring everything ruthlessly to light was a "perversion of the human will." Fortunately, however, it was not possible even so to prove much against Luther, for, "though the sayings emanated from him originally,[3] still, they remained

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $5^2$, p. 107.

[2] Walch, in the edition of the Table-Talk, Luther's Works, in Jena ed., 22, quotes various passages from Protestant scholars who thought as he did. Preface, p. 25 f.

[3] He points out incidentally (p. 36) that the authority for the Table-Talk was not absolutely unquestioned. He was not acquainted with the original documents, most of which have now been published.

mere sayings, spoken without deliberation and written down without his knowledge or consent."[1]

When he made this last statement Walch was not aware that Luther's utterances were committed to writing in his presence and with his full "consent and knowledge" even, for instance, when spoken in the garden. "Strange as it may appear to us, these men were usually busy recording Luther's casual words, just as though they were seated in a lecture-hall."[2] Once, in 1540, Catherine Bora said jestingly to Luther, when they were at table with several industrious students: "Doctor, don't teach them without being paid; they have already written down quite a lot; Lauterbach, however, has written the most and all that is best." To which the Doctor replied; "I have taught and preached gratis for thirty years, why then should I now begin to take money for it in my old age?"[3]

The style of the original notes of the Table-Talk in many instances shows plainly that they were made while the conversation was actually in progress; even the frequent defects in the construction of the original notes, which have now been published, prove this.[4]

In 1844 E. Förstemann in his edition of the Table-Talk, as against Walch, had expressed himself strongly in favour of its correctness; he even went so far as to remark, with all the prejudice of an editor for his own work, that these conversations constituted the most important part of Luther's spiritual legacy, and that here "the current of his thoughts flows even more limpidly than elsewhere."[5]

[1] Bindseil also remarked of the "*Colloquia*": "We cannot deny that it would have been better had much of this not been written." "Tischreden," ed. Förstemann and Bindseil, 4, p. xi. Cp. similar passages, *ibid.*, p. xxiv., n., and contrast with them Aurifaber's eulogy of the Table-Talk which came "from the saintly lips of Luther," p. xxii.

[2] Kroker, p. 2. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 3. Moreover, the rough notes drafted at the table were afterwards re-copied and amended, and this amended form alone is all we have. Cp. Kroker, "Archiv für Reformationsgesch," 7, 1909, p. 84. In the Weimar ed. a first volume, edited by E. Kroker, of the Table-Talk is at present appearing. In it are found the accounts given by Veit Dietrich, and another important collection dating from the earlier portion of the third decade of the sixteenth century. Vol. ii., commencing with Schlaginhaufen, is already in the hands of the printers.

[5] Vol. i., Preface, p. vii. In the Latin edition of the Table-Talk Bindseil, in spite of the scruples alluded to above (n. 1), speaks in praise of the Table-Talk, and makes his own the words of J. Müllensiefen (1857). The Table-Talk showed Luther as "the noblest offshoot

Walter Köhler likewise, speaking of the Table-Talk edited by Kroker, considers it a "reliable source."[1]

Of Johann Aurifaber, who was the first to publish the Table-Talk in German, at Eisleben in 1566, and through whose edition it was most widely known, F. X. Funk said in 1882: "As his devotion to Luther led him to make public all the words and sayings which had come to his knowledge, the book, in spite of its defective plan, is important for the history of the Reformer and his time. Its value has always been admitted, though from different standpoints; of this its numerous editions are a proof."[2] The defect in the arrangement consists in the classifying of the sayings handed down according to the different subjects, whereby they lose their historical setting. The large, new edition of the Table-Talk now planned, will necessarily abandon this confusing arrangement. It has been proved, however, that Aurifaber had a reliable version to work on. "He most probably took for the basis of his edition Lauterbach's preliminary work,"[3] says Kawerau.

of his nation"; it is true the coarseness and plainness of speech are inexcusable, but it all contributes towards the "perfect characterisation of the great man," for "the wrinkles and furrows are part of his portrait" ("Coll.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. xiii.). Luther's opponents were, however, of a different opinion even in the early days. G. Steinhausen, in his "Deutsche Kulturgesch.," Leipzig, 1904, p. 513, quotes Johann Fickler of Salzburg, who describes the Table-Talk as "full of obscene and stinking jests," and compares it to the erotic products of the Epicureans. Steinhausen himself is loath to go so far.

[1] "Theol. Jahresbericht," 23, p. 488.

[2] Wetzer and Welte, "KL.,"[3] art. "Aurifaber." H. Böhmer likewise admits that: "Although their [the principal witnesses': Dietrich, Lauterbach, and Mathesius] statements must always be critically examined, yet it is established, that they have preserved for us an exceptional number of data concerning Luther's life, acts, and opinions. They supply us with what on the whole is an accurate account, arranged in chronological order, which brings the real Luther almost as closely before us as his own letters and writings." In his objections against the "principal witnesses" he does not pay sufficient attention to the existence of the original notes ("Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung,"[2] 1910, p. 105). Protestant theologians and historians of Luther are now in the habit of laying stress on the Table-Talk, no less than on Luther's other works, and that even in the case of weighty and controverted questions. Examples might be quoted from Loofs, Drews, G. Kawerau, J. Köstlin, G. Ward, etc.

[3] "RE. f. prot. Theol.,"[3] art. "Aurifaber." In the "Abh. der Kgl. Ges. d. Wissensch. Götting., Phil.-hist. Kl., N.F.," 1, Wilhelm Meyer deals with the Collections of Lauterbach and Aurifaber. In the same way Kawerau points out in his "Studien und Kritiken," 81, 1908, p. 338, "the importance of these notes for Luther's biography and for a knowledge of his home life." Cp. Kawerau, *ibid.*, p. 354, on

This collection of Lauterbach's has been incorporated, for the most part, in the Halle MS. edited by Bindseil under the title "*Colloquia*," etc.[1] In addition to this, Aurifaber made use of the notes by Cordatus, Schlaginhaufen, Veit Dietrich, Mathesius and others. Kawerau draws attention to the fact, that the coarseness to be found in the German edition is not solely due to the compiler, as some of Luther's apologists had urged, but really belongs to the original texts. Gross sayings of the sort not only gave no offence to Aurifaber, but he delights to repeat them at great length. Yet in certain instances he appears to have watered down and modified his text, as one investigator has proved by a comparison with the notes of Cordatus.[2]

### *The Pith of the New Religion. Doubts on Faith.*

We shall begin by giving some practical theological examples out of the Table-Talk which may serve further to elucidate certain of Luther's ideas already referred to, e.g. those concerning temptations and their remedy, particularly that most serious temptation of all, viz. regarding the saving power of fiducial faith, which, so Luther thinks, comes through our "weakness." To this, the tender spot and at the same time cardinal point of his teaching and practical morality, Luther returns again and again, with a frankness for which indeed we may be grateful. Owing to the nature of the conversations and to his habitual loquacity it may happen that some of the trains of thought and modes of expression resemble those already quoted elsewhere; this, however, is no reason for neglecting them, for they testify anew to the ideas of which his mind was full, and also to the state of habitual depression in which he lived.

the old re-arrangement according to the subject-matter. The "authenticity" of the sayings which occur in these revised editions can be proved in many instances from the original writings and from the light thrown on them by parallel passages now in print, but the "dates" are another matter. Where, in the present work, any date is taken from the revised editions, it rests solely on the authority of the latter. Cp. Kroker's remarks on the Table-Talk of 1540 in the "Archiv f. Reformationsgesch.," 1908, above, p. 218, n. 2. On Aurifaber's re-arrangement of the Table-Talk, see Cristiani, "Revue de questions historiques," 91, 1912, p. 113.

[1] Lauterbach, Luther's pupil, who was also the author of the Diary, revised his Collection and sought to improve upon the arrangement; a similar, later revision of this formed the basis of the "*Colloquia*" of Rebenstock. Kawerau, *ibid.*

[2] Cp. below, p. 231, n. 2.

"Early this morning the devil held a disputation with me on Zwingli, and I learned that a full head is better able to wrangle with the devil than an empty one. . . . Hence," he says, "eat and drink and live well, for bodies tempted in this way must have plenty of food and drink; but lewdsters, and those tempted by sensual passion, ought to fast."[1]

"For those who are tempted fasting is a hundred times worse than eating and drinking."[2]

"When a man is tempted, or is in the company of those who are tempted, let him put to death Moses [i.e. the Law] and cast stones at him; but, when he recovers, the Law must be preached to him also; a man who is troubled must not have new trouble heaped upon him."[3]

"In the monastery the words 'just and justice' fell like a thunderbolt upon my conscience. I was terrified when I heard it said: 'He is just, and He will punish.'"[4] [But now I know]: "Our justice is a relative justice [a foreign righteousness]. Though I am not good, yet Christ is good."[5] "Hence I say to the devil: I, indeed, am a sinner, but Christ is righteous."[6]

Many admissions reveal his altered feelings, the inconstancy and sudden changes to which he was so prone.

"I do not always take pleasure in the Word. Were I always so disposed towards the Word of God as I was formerly, then I should indeed be happy. Even dear St. Paul had to complain in this regard, for he bewails another law which wars in his members. But is the Word to be considered false because it does not happen to suit me?"[7]

"Unless we wrap ourselves round with this God, Who has become both Man and Word, Satan will surely devour us." "Hence the aim of the Prophets and the Apostles, viz. to make us hold fast to the Word." "It costs God Almighty much to manifest His power and mercy even to a few. He must slay many kings before a few men learn to fear Him, and He must save many a rascal and many a prostitute before even a handful of sinners learn to believe in Him."[8]

"So soon as I say: 'Yes, indeed, I am a poor sinner,' Christ replies, 'But I died for you, I baptised you and I teach you daily.' . . . Ever bear this in mind, that it is not Christ Who affrights you, but Satan; believe this as though God Himself were speaking."[9]

"Is it not a curse that we should magnify our sins so greatly? Why do we not exalt our baptism just as we exalt our inheritance? A princely baby remains a prince even though he should s—— in his cradle. A child does not cease being heir to his father's property for having soiled his father's habiliments. If only we could see our way to make much of our inheritance and

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 23.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 11. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 48, [4] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 115. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 26. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 88 (Khummer).
[9] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 131.

patrimony before God ! . . . Yet children call God quite simply their Father."[1]

" You are not the only man to be tempted ; I also am tempted and have bigger sins piled on my conscience than you and your fathers. I would rather I had been a procurer or highwayman than that I should have offered up Christ in the Mass for so long a time."[2]

The last words may serve as an introduction to a remarkable series of statements concerning the religious practices of the ancient Church. As these words show, he does not shrink from dishonouring by the most unworthy comparisons even those acts and doctrines which, by reason of their religious value, were dear to the whole Church of antiquity and had been regarded by some of the purest and most exalted souls as their only consolation in this life.

Elsewhere he says of the sacrifice of the Mass : " The blind priestlings run to the altar like pigs to the trough " ; this, " the shame of our scarlet woman of Babylon, must be exposed." " I maintain that all public houses of ill-fame, strictly forbidden by God though they be, yea, manslaughter, thieving, murder and adultery, are not so wicked and pernicious as this abomination of the Popish Mass."[3]

He says of the Catholic preacher : " Where the undefiled Evangel is not preached, the whoremonger is far less a sinner than the preacher, and the brothel less wicked than the church ; that the procurer should daily make prostitutes of virgins, honest wives and cloistered nuns, is indeed frightful to hear of ; still, his case is not so bad as that of the Popish preacher."[4]

The Church's exhortation to make use of fasting as a remedy in the struggle against sin—in which counsel she had the support both of Holy Scripture and of immemorial experience—was thus described by Luther : " No eating or drinking, gluttony or drunkenness can be so bad as fasting ; indeed, it would be better to swill day and night rather than to fast for such a purpose," so " ludicrous and shameful in God's sight " was such fasting.[5]

" Confession " (as made by Catholics), Luther asserted in 1538, " is less to be condoned than any infamy." " The devil assails Christians with pressing temptations, most of all on account of their confessions."[6]

The life of the Saints in the Catholic Church, he says elsewhere, consisted in " their having prayed much, fasted, laboured, taken

[1] Schlaginhaufen, " Aufzeichnungen," p. 115.
[2] Cordatus, " Tagebuch," p. 95.
[3] " Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 773 f. Sermon in 1524.
[4] " Werke," Erl. ed., 7, p. 213. Church-Postils.
[5] *Ibid.*, $13^2$, p. 108, Church-Postils.
[6] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 35.

the discipline, slept on hard pallets and worn poor clothing, a kind of holiness which any dog or pig might practise any day."[1]

He voices his abhorrence of the monastic life in figures such as the following: "Discalced Friars are lice placed by the devil on God Almighty's fur coat, and Friars-preacher are the fleas of His shirt." "I believe the Franciscans to be possessed of the devil, body and soul,"[2] and, reverting once again to his favourite image, he adds elsewhere: "Neither the dens of evil women nor any secret sins are so pernicious as those rules and vows which the devil himself has invented."[3]

We have to proceed to the uninviting task of collecting other sayings of Luther's, particularly from the Table-Talk, which are characteristic of his more than plain manner of speaking, and to pass in review the somewhat peculiar views held by him on matters sexual. As it is to be feared that the delicacy of some of our readers will be offended, we may point out that those who wish are at liberty to skip the pages which follow and to continue from Section 7 of the present chapter which forms the natural sequence of what has gone before. Certainly no one would have had just cause for complaint had one of the guests at Luther's table chosen to take leave when the conversation began to turn on matters distasteful to him. The historian, however, is obliged to remain. True to his task he may not close his ears to what is said, however unpleasant the task of listener. He must bear in mind that Cordatus, one of Luther's guests, in the Diary he wrote praises Luther's Table-Talk as "more precious than the oracles of Apollo." This praise Cordatus bestows not only on the "serious theological discourses," but also expressly on those sayings which were apparently merely frivolous.[4] Another pupil, Mathesius, who was also frequently present, assures us he never heard an improper word from Luther's lips.[5] This he writes in spite of the fact, that one of the first anecdotes he relates, embellished with a Latin verse from Philo, contains an unseemly jest,[6]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 304, "Tischreden."

[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," pp. 136, 135.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., $10^2$, p. 465. Church-Postils.

[4] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 1: "*Qui me invito hec describit, tantum tali animo describat, quali ego, simplici et candido, et laudet verba Lutheri magis quam Apollinis miracula* [*oracula*]."

[5] "Historien von des ehrwürdigen in Gott seligen thewren Manns Gottes Doctoris Martini Lutheri Leben," etc., Nuremberg, 1566, p. 146.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 147: "*Arvinam quaerunt multi in podice porci*" (Philo), applied by Luther to the marriage of a "young fellow with an old hag (*vetula*)."

and that he himself immediately after tells how Luther on one occasion told the people from the pulpit that: "Ein weiter Leib und zeitiger Mist ist gut zu scheiden"; he even mentions that Luther was carried away to express himself yet more plainly concerning the ventral functions, till he suddenly reined in and corrected himself. The truth is that Mathesius was an infatuated admirer of Luther's.

As a matter of fact, terms descriptive of the lower functions of the body again and again serve Luther not only to express his anger and contempt, but as comparisons illustrative of his ideas, whether on indifferent matters or on the highest and most sacred topics. It is true that what he said was improper rather than obscene, coarse rather than lascivious. Nor, owing to the rough and uncouth character of the age and the plainness of speech then habitual, were his expressions, taken as a whole, so offensive to his contemporaries as to us. Yet, that Luther should have cultivated this particular sort of language so as to outstrip in it all his literary contemporaries, scarcely redounds to his credit. His readers and hearers of that day frequently expressed their disgust, and at times his language was so strong that even Catherine Bora was forced to cry halt.

As a matter of course the devil came in for the largest share of this kind of vituperation, more particularly that devil who was filling Luther with anxiety and trouble of mind. The Pope and his Catholic opponents came a good second. Luther was, however, fond of spicing in the same way even his utterances on purely worldly matters.

"When we perceive the devil tempting us," he says, "we can easily overcome him by putting his pride to shame and saying to him: 'Leck mich im Arss,' or 'Scheiss in die Bruch und hengs an den Halss.'"[1] This counsel he actually put in practice: "On May 7, 1532, the devil was tormenting me in the afternoon, and thoughts troubled me, such as that a thunderbolt might kill me, so I replied to him: 'Leck mich im Arss, I am going to sleep, not to hold a disputation.'"[2] When the devil would not cease urging his sins against him he had a drastic method of effectually disposing of his importunity.[3]

He relates in the Table-Talk, in 1536, the "artifice" by which the parish-priest of Wittenberg, his friend Johann Bugenhagen (Pomeranus), had put the devil to flight. It was a question of

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 27.
[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 82.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

the milk which the devil had bewitched by means of sorceresses or witches. Luther says: "Dr. Pommer's plan was the best, viz. to plague them [the witches] with filth and stir it into the milk so that everything stank. For when his [Pommer's] cows also lost their milk, he promptly took a vessel filled with milk, relieved himself in it, poured out the contents and said: 'There, devil, eat that. After that he was no longer deprived of the milk."[1] Before this his wife and the maids had worried themselves to death trying "to get the butter to come"—as we read in another account of this occurrence in a version of the Table-Talk which is more accurately dated—but all to no purpose. "Then Pommer came up, mocked at the devil and eased himself in the churn. Thereupon Satan ceased his tricks, for he is proud and cannot bear to be laughed at."[2]

Less formal, according to him, was the action of another individual, who had put Satan to flight by a "*crepitus ventris.*"[3]

Still, all temptations of the devil are profitable to us, so Luther says, for, if we were always at peace, the devil himself "would treat us ignominiously,"[4] for he is full of nothing but deception and filthiness. Luther, like many of his contemporaries and later writers, was well acquainted with the devil's private life, and convinced that "devil's prostitutes: '*cum quibus Sathan coiret*'" actually existed.[5]

As the filthy details of the expulsion of the devil from the churn are omitted in Lauterbach's Diary, certain defenders of Luther think they are warranted in drawing from this particular passage the conclusion that the Table-Talk had been polluted by "unseemly" additions in Aurifaber's and other later versions (above, p. 224 f.) which "must not be laid to the charge of the Reformer." "Not Luther in his domestic circle, but the compilers and collectors of the much-discussed Table-Talk, Aurifaber in particular, were rude, obscene and vulgar." The publication of the original documents, for instance, by Kroker in 1903, has, however, shown the first version of the Table-Talk to be even more intolerably coarse, and confirmed the substantial accuracy of the text of the older German Table-Talk at present under discussion.[6] Preger, the editor of Schlaginhaufen's notes, rightly repudiated such evasions even in 1888, together with the alleged

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 78. In the first edition of the German Table-Talk, 1566, p. 307. Cp. against O. Waltz, on the authenticity of the account, N. Paulus, "Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess vornehmlich im 16. Jahrhundert," 1910, p. 39.

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 380, said between October 28 and December 12, 1536. Cp. Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 121: "The village pastor and the schoolmaster had their own way of dealing [with the witches] and plagued them greatly. But D. Pommer's way is the best of all, viz. to plague them with filth and stir it well up and so make all their things to stink."

[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 56.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 74 (Khummer).

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[6] Cp. N. Paulus in his art. on Kroker's edition of the "Tischreden in der Mathesischen Sammlung" ("Hist. polit. Blätter," 133, 1904, pp. 199 ff., 208 f.).

proofs urged by apologists. "We want to see Luther," he says, "under the actual conditions in which he moved, and in all his own native rudeness."[1] Kroker also pointed out that even the first writers of the Table-Talk made use of certain signs in their notes (e.g. × or | ) in lieu of certain words employed by Luther which they felt scrupulous about writing.[2]

"The entire lack of restraint with which Luther expresses himself," a Protestant writer says of the Table-Talk edited by Kroker, "makes a remarkable impression on the reader of to-day, more particularly when we consider that his wife and children were among the audience. . . . In the Table-Talk we meet with numerous statements, some of them far-fetched, which are really coarse. . . . Although we can explain Luther's love of obscenities, still, this does not hinder us from deploring his use of such and placing it to his discredit. It is true," the same writer proceeds, "that Luther is never lascivious or merely frivolous."[3] As regards the latter assertion the texts to be adduced will afford a better opportunity of judging. That at any rate in the instances already mentioned Luther did not intentionally wish to excite his hearers' passions is clear, and the fact has been admitted even by Catholic polemics who have really read his writings and Table-Talk.[4]

An alarming number of dirty expressions concerning the Pope and Catholicism occur in the Table-Talk.

[1] W. Preger, "Tischreden . . . nach den Aufzeichnungen von J. Schlaginhaufen," p. iv.

[2] Cp. N. Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 40; Kroker, pp. 156, 158, 262. Kroker says (p. 158), "Luther probably made use of a colloquial word for phallus, or something similar." Luther is complaining of the excesses to which the Catholics gave themselves up on pilgrimages, and which the Pope constantly indulged in. One MS. there cited omits the passage altogether. The Table-Talk of Mathesius (p. 141) contains the following speech of Luther's in 1540 under the title "*Exemplum verecundiae Lutheri*": "*Rochlicensis princeps. Is interrogabat 'Qui vocatur verum* [sic] *de domina vestra natante cum equite per aquas? Non volo autem obscoenum audire sed verum.*' Ich mein, das heisst: die × ausgeschwembt"). For the liberty which Aurifaber permits himself in the matter of toning down and weakening the original text of the Table-Talk, cp., for instance, the remarks in the Preface to the Cordatus Collection. What the latter gives in all its crudity (see the twenty-four passages there quoted by Wrampelmeyer) Aurifaber either does not reproduce at all or does so in an inoffensive form, or accompanied with such expressions as "to speak decently," etc. Cordatus knew and acknowledged that it was an "*audax facinus*" to write down all he heard, but his opinion was that "*pudorem vincebat utilitas*"; Luther, who was watching his work, never gave him to understand by so much as one word that it did not meet with his approval.

[3] "Beil. zur Münchener Allg. Ztng.," 1904, No. 26.

[4] G. Evers ("Martin Luther," 6, p. 701), for instance, says that "In his Table-Talk we find not merely plain-spoken, but really cynical discourses, and much which to us sounds obscene. Still, his admirers may possibly be right when they absolve him of indecency or of any intention to arouse sensual passion."

"Were the Pope to cite me to appear before him," Luther says, "I should not go. I should s—— upon the summons because he is hostile to me; but were I summoned by a Council, then I should go."[1]

Elsewhere, however, he says of the Council: "I should like, during my lifetime, to see a Council deal with the matter, for they would give one another a fine pummelling, and us a splendid reason for writing against them."[2]

What was the origin of the Pope's authority? "I see plainly whence the Pope came; he is the vomit of the lazy, idle Lords and Princes."[3]—"Then the Pope burst upon the world with his pestilential traditions and bound men by his carnal ordinances, his rules and Masses, to his filthy, rotten law."[4]

Such unseemly expressions occur at times in conjunction with thoughts intended to be sublime. "I hold that God has just as much to do in bringing things back to nothingness as He has in creating them. This he [Luther] said, referring to human excrement. He also said: I am astounded that the dung-hill of the world has not reached the very sky."[5]—"He took his baby into his arms and perceived that it was soiling its diaper. His remark was that the small folk by messing themselves and by their howling and screaming earn their food and drink just as much as we deserve heaven by our good works."[6] He even brings the holy name of God into conjunction with one such customary vulgar expression. "I too have laid down rules and sought to be master, Aber der frum Gott hat mich in sein Arss fahren lassen und meyn Meystern ist nichts worden."[7]

"There are many students here, but I do not believe there is one who would allow himself to be anointed [by the Papists], or open his mouth for the Pope to fill it with his filth; unless, perhaps, Mathesius or Master Plato."[8]

In his strange explanation of how far God is or is not the author of evil, he says: Semei wished to curse and God merely directed his curse against David (2 Kings xvi. 10). "God says: 'Curse him and no one else.' Just as if a man wishes to relieve himself I cannot prevent him, but should he wish to do so on the table here, then I should object and tell him to betake himself to the corner."[9]

"The Pope is a cuckoo who gobbles the eggs of his Church and vomits the Cardinals."[10]

It is not surprising that in Luther's conversations on non-theological, i.e. on secular subjects, similar and even more offensive expressions occur.

[1] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen" (Loesche), p. 218.
[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 83.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 61, and "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 296.
[4] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 123.
[5] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 7.
[6] *Ibid.*, p 65.
[7] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 106.
[8] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 154.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 203.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

He thinks that we "feed on the bowels of the peasants," for they "expel the stones" which produce the trees which produce the fruit on which we feed.[1]—He has a joke at the expense of an unlearned man who had mistaken the Latin equivalent of the German word "Kunst" for a common German term: "Wenn man eynem auff die Kunst küsset so bescheist er sich."[2]

Speaking of women who had the impertinence to wish for a share in the government, he says: "The 'Furtzlecher' want to rule and we suffer for it; they really should be making cheese and milking the cows."[3] Elsewhere he says to the preachers: "We never seek to please anybody nor to make our mouth the 'Arschloch' of another."[4]

"Those who now grudge the preachers of the Word their bread will persecute us until we end by disgracing ourselves. Then . . . '*adorabunt nostra stercora.*'" By a natural transition of ideas he goes on to say: "They will be glad to get rid of us, and we shall be glad to be out of them. We are as ready to part as 'ein reiffer Dreck und ein weit Arssloch.'"[5]—"Rather than let them have such a work [a conciliatory writing requested by the inhabitants of Augsburg] I would 'in einen Becher scheissen und bissen,' that they might have whereof to eat and drink."[6]

"The lawyers scream [when we appropriate Church property]: '*Sunt bona ecclesiae!*' . . . Yes [I say], but where are we to get our bread? 'We leave you to see to that,' they say. Yes, the devil may thank them for that. We theologians have no worse enemies than the lawyers. . . . We here condemn all jurists, even the pious ones, for they do not know what '*ecclesia*' means. . . . If a jurist wishes to dispute with you about this, say to him: 'Listen, my good fellow, on this subject no lawyer should speak till he hears a sow s——, then he must say: 'Thank you, Granny dear, it is long since I listened to a sermon.'"[7]

After the above there is no need of giving further instances of the kind of language with which opponents within his fold had to put up from Luther. It will suffice to mention the poem "*De merda*" with which he retaliated on the

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 417.

[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 428.

[3] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 99.

[4] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 219.

[5] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 188. For the equivalent passages in Latin see "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 306, and "Colloq.," ed. Rebenstock (Francof., 1571), 1, p. 149', where the famous "*adorabunt nostra stercora*" occurs. Cp. the passages in the old German Table-Talk, "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 397, which agrees substantially with the above: "They will oppress us until we forget ourselves, and then they will worship our filth and regard it as balsam," and in Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 303: "I am ripe dung," etc.

[6] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 81.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 340. A revolting collection of low abuse of the lawyers might be made from the Table-Talk, "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, pp. 229, 233, 235, 244, 246 f.

satirist Lemnius for some filthy verses,[1] and the following prediction to his Zwickau opponents: "When trouble befalls them, whenever it may be, they will 'in die Hosen scheissen und ein' solchen Gestanck anrichten' that nobody will be able to tarry in their neighbourhood."[2]

It is also difficult for us to tarry any longer over these texts, especially as in what follows we shall meet with others of a similar character.[3]

Not to do injustice to the general character of Luther's Table-Talk, we must again lay stress on the fact, that very many of his evening conversations are of irreproachable propriety. We may peruse many pages of the notes without meeting anything in the least offensive, but much that is both fine and attractive. Events of the day, history, nature, politics or the Bible, form in turn the subject-matter of the Table-Talk, and much of what was said was true, witty and not seldom quite edifying.

Still, the fact remains that filthy talking and vulgarity came so natural to Luther as to constitute a questionable side to his character.

Even when writing seriously, and in works intended for the general public, he seems unable to bridle his pen.

In the book "Wider das Bapstum zu Rom vom Teuffel gestifft," he introduces, for instance, the following dialogue: "We have enacted in our Decretals [say the Papists] that only the Pope shall summon Councils and appoint to benefices. [Luther]: My friend, is that really true? Who commanded you to decree this? [Answer]: Be silent, you heretic, what proceeds from our mouth must be hearkened to. [Luther]: So you say; but which mouth do you mean? Da die Förze ausfahren? To such an opinion you are welcome. Or that into which good Corso [wine] is poured? Da scheiss ein Hund ein! [Answer]: Out upon you, you shameless Luther, is it thus you talk to the Pope? [Luther]: Out upon you rather, you rude asses and blasphemous desperadoes, to address the Emperor and the Empire in such a manner! How can you venture to insult and slight four such great Councils and the four greatest Christian Emperors 'umb euer Förze und Drecketal [*sic*] willen?' What reason have

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 139, with the disgusting verses: "*Ventre urges merdam vellesque cacare libenter | ingentem. Facis at, merdipoeta, nihil.*" Within ten lines the word "*merda*" occurs twelve times. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 673, N. 422.

[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 48.

[3] See the detailed examples given in vol. iv., xxv. 3.

you to think yourselves anything but big, rude, senseless fools and donkeys?"[1]

Before this he says in the same work, in personal abuse of Pope Paul III.: "Dear donkey, don't lick! Oh, dear little Pope-ass, were you to fall and some filth escape you, how all the world would mock at you and say: Lo, how the Pope-ass has disgraced itself! . . . Oh, fiendish Father, do not be unmindful of your great danger."[2]

"Dr. Luther is a rough sort of fellow; were he to hear that, he would rush in booted and spurred like a countryman and say: The Pope had been thrust into the Church by all the devils from hell."[3] "'As much as the sun is greater than the moon, so does the Pope excel the Emperor.' . . . Hearken, reader; if you forget yourself and your nether garments have to be fumigated with incense and juniper, from such a reeking sin the Most Holy Father would never absolve you."[4]

"'Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.' 'Whatsoever' means [according to the Catholics] all that there is on earth, churches, bishops, emperors, kings and possibly 'alle Förze aller Esel und sein eigen Förze auch.' Ah, dear brother in Christ, put it down to my credit when I speak here and elsewhere so rudely of the cursed, noxious, ungainly monster at Rome. Whoever knows my mind must admit that I am far, far too lenient, and that no words or thoughts of mine could repay his shameful and desperate abuse of the Word and Name of Christ, our beloved Lord and Saviour."[5]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 149.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 148. Cp. above, p. 151, n. 3. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 169 f.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 173 f. Jonas, in his Latin edition of the work "Wider das Bapstum," rendered the passage: "*Ne sine ullo laxativo vel pillulis ventris onere honores papam,*" etc.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 201. Cp. Luther's insolent language towards the Pope in his other writings and letters; for instance, when he declares that the Princes who were not on his own side were "dem Papst in den Arsch gebacken" ("Werke," Erl. ed., 45, p. 398); or: "I s—— on the dispensation of the legate and his master" (Briefwechsel," 8, p. 53; cp. p. 113); or "that Pope and Legate 'im Arsch wollten lecken'" ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 233). As early as 1518, in a Lenten sermon, he shows his predisposition to crudity: "If we drag our good works into the light, 'so soll der Teufel den Arsch daran wischen,' as indeed he does" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 276). Cp. also his discourse in 1515 against the "Little Saints" (vol. i., p. 69 f.). In the saying just referred to he is playing on a coarse proverb. In his collection of proverbs (not intended for publication, but edited by Thiele) he has accumulated quite a number of filthy sayings, those containing the word "Dreck" being unpleasantly numerous. Many of the obscenities occurring in his sermons and writings were suggested by proverbs which themselves reek too much of the stable, but which he sometimes still further embellishes. The manner in which he uses the gross word "Farzen" with reference to the Pope or the monks can be seen in "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 715, and Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 74. In one of his attacks on the Jews he says: "Kiss the pig on its 'Pacem' and 'Pirzl,'" etc. ("Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 211); and again: "Here, here for a kiss! The devil has 'in die Hosen geschmissen und

"I must cease," Luther says elsewhere in his "Wider das Bapstum," after speaking of a Decretal, "I cannot bear to wallow any longer in this blasphemous, hellish, devils' filth and stench; let someone else read it. Whoever wants to listen to God's Word, let him read Holy Writ; whoever prefers to listen to the devil's word, let him read the Pope's Drecket [*sic*] and Bulls," etc.[1]

We must here consider more closely the statement, already alluded to, made by some of Luther's apologists. To remove the unfavourable impression left on the mind of present-day readers by his unbridled language an attempt has been made to represent it as having been quite the usual thing in Luther's day.

It is true that, saving some expressions peculiar to the Saxon peasant, such obscenity is to be met with among the neo-Humanist writers of that age, both in Germany and abroad. Even Catholic preachers in Germany, following the manners of the time, show but scant consideration for the delicacy of their hearers when speaking of sexual matters or of the inferior functions of the human body. It is quite impossible to set up a definite standard of what is becoming, which shall apply equally to every age and every state of civilisation. But if Luther's defenders desire to exonerate him by comparing him with others, it is clear that they are not justified in adducing examples taken from burlesque, popular writers, light literature, or even from certain writings of the Humanists. The filth contained in these works had been denounced by many a better author even in that age. Luther, as already explained (vol. ii., p. 150 f.), must not be judged by a profane standard, but by that which befits a writer on religion and the spiritual life, a reformer and founder of a new religion. The fact remains that it is impossible to instance any popular religious writer who ever went so far as, or even approached, Luther in his lack of restraint in this particular. Luther, in the matter of licentiousness of language, stands out as a giant apart.

den Bauch abermal geleeret.' This is indeed a holy thing for the Jews, and all would-be Jews to kiss, eat, drink, and worship, while the devil in his turn must eat and drink what his disciples 'speien, oben und unten auswerfen können.' Host and guest have indeed met, have cooked and served the meat . . . The devil is feasting with his English [angelic ?] snout and gobbles up greedily whatever 'der Juden unteres und oberes Maul speiet und spritzet.' Yes, that is the dainty he enjoys" ("Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 282).

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 203.

The passages to be quoted later on marriage and the sexual question will make this still more apparent.

His own contemporaries declared aloud that he stood quite alone in the matter of coarseness and in his incessant use of vituperation; Catholics, such as Dungersheim, and opponents of the Catholic Church like Bullinger, testify alike in the strongest terms to the impression made upon them. Some of their numerous statements will be quoted below. We may, however, remark that the severest strictures of all came from Sir Thomas More, who, for all his kindliness of disposition, condemned most indignantly the filthy language of the assailant of King Henry VIII. of England. The untranslatable passage may be read in its Latin original in the note below.[1] Caspar Schatzgeyer, another learned opponent of Luther's, and likewise a man of mild temper, also rebuked Luther with great vehemence for the ignoble and coarse tone he was wont to employ against theological adversaries; he plainly hints that no one within living memory had brought into the literary arena such an arsenal of obscene language. Luther behaved "like a conqueror, assured by the spirit that he was able to walk upon the sea." Spirits must, however, be tried. "The triumphal car of the victor can only be awarded to Luther and his followers if it be admitted that to triumph is synonymous with befouling the face and garments of all foes with vituperative filth ('*conviciorum stercora*), so that they are forced to save themselves by flight from the intolerable stench and dirt. Never in any literary struggle has such an array of weapons of that sort been seen." One could well understand how such a man inspired fear amongst all who valued the cleanliness of their garments. Well might he be left to triumph with his assertion, which his adversaries would be the last to gainsay, "that everything which is not Gospel, must make room for the Gospel."[2]

[1] Such was the writer's indignation that his words are scarcely worthy of a Humanist. The following comes from the "*Responsio ad convitia Lutheri*" (1523, "Opera," Lovanii, 1566, p. 116′), not published under More's own name: "*Nihil habet in ore (Lutherus) praeter latrinas, merdas, stercora, quibus foedius et spurcius quam ullus unquam scurra scurratur. . . . Si pergat scurrilitate ludere nec aliud in ore gestare quam sentinas, cloacas, latrinas, merdas, stercora, faciant quod volent alii, nos ex tempore capiemus consilium, velimusne sic bacchantem . . . cum suis merdis et stercoribus cacantem cacatumque relinquere.*"

[2] In "*Replica contra periculosa scripta,*" etc., 1522, O, 4′. Also in "Opp. omnia," Ingolstadii, 1543.

Some have gone so far as to say, that the tone of the popular religious writers of the period, from 1450–1550, was frequently so vulgar that there is little to choose between them and Luther. This is an unfair and unhistorical aspersion on a sort of literature then much read and which, though now little known, is slowly coming to its due owing to research. We may call to mind the long list of those in whose writings Luther could have found not merely models of decency and good taste—which might well have shamed him—but also much else worthy of imitation; for instance, Thomas à Kempis, Jacob Wimpfeling, Johann Mensing, Johann Hoffmeister, Michael Vehe, Johann Wild, Matthias Sittard, Caspar Schatzgeyer, Hieronymus Dungersheim, Ulrich Krafft, Johannes Fabri, Marcus de Weida, Johann Staupitz, and lastly Peter Canisius, who also belonged practically to this period. Many other popular religious authors might be enumerated, but it is impossible to instance a single one among them who would have descended to the level of the language employed by Luther.

Moreover, those secular writers of that day whose offensive crudities have been cited in excuse of Luther, all differed from him in one particular, viz. they did not employ these as he did, or at least not to the same extent, as controversial weapons. It is one thing to collect dirty stories and to dwell on them at inordinate length in order to pander to the depraved taste of the mob; it is quite another to pelt an enemy with filthy abuse. Hate and fury only make a vulgar tone more repulsive. There are phrases used by Luther against theological adversaries which no benevolent interpretation avails to excuse. Such was his rude answer to the request of the Augsburgers (above, p. 233), or, again, "I would rather advise you to drink Malvasian wine and to believe in Christ alone, and leave the monk (who through being a monk has denied Christ) to swill water or 'seinen eigenen Urin.'"[1]

It may occur to one to plead in justification the language of the peasants of that day, and it must be conceded, that, even now, in certain districts the countryman's talk is such as can only be appreciated in the country. The author of a book, "Wie das Volk spricht" (1855), who made a study of the people in certain regions not particularly remarkable

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 47, p. 315.

for culture or refinement, says quite rightly in his Preface, that his examples are often quite unsuited " for the ears of ladies, and those of a timorous disposition " ; " the common people don't wear kid gloves." This writer was dealing with the present day, yet one might ask what indulgence an author would find were he to draw his language from such a source, particularly did he happen to be a theologian, a spiritual writer or a reformer? Luther undoubtedly savours of his time, but his expressions are too often reminiscent of Saxon familiarity; for instance, when he vents his displeasure in the words : " The devil has given his mother ' eine Fliege in den Hintern.' "[1]

Luther was fond of introducing indelicacies of this sort even into theological tracts written in Latin and destined for the use of the learned, needless to say to the huge scandal of foreigners not accustomed to find such coarseness in the treatment of serious subjects. Under the circumstances we can readily understand the indignation of men like Sir Thomas More (above, p. 237, n. 1) at the rudeness of the German.

Luther's example proved catching among his followers and supporters. A crowd of writers became familiar with the mention of subjects on which a discreet silence is usually observed, and grew accustomed to use words hitherto banished from polite society. So well were Luther's works known that they set the tone. His favourite pupils, Mathesius and Aurifaber, for instance, seem scarcely aware of the unseemliness of certain questions discussed. Sleidan, the well-known Humanist historian, described the obscene woodcuts published by Luther and Lucas Cranach in 1545 in mockery of the Papacy, " as calmly as though they had been no worse than Mr. Punch's kindly caricatures."[2] Luther actually told the theologians and preachers (and his words carried even more weight with secular writers, who were less hampered by considerations of decency) that " those who filled the office of preacher must hold the filth of the Pope and the bishops up to their very noses,"[3] for the " Roman court, and the Pope who is the bishop of that

[1] " Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 57.
[2] Böhmer, " Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," p. 72 ; 2 ed., p. 106.
[3] " Werke," Erl. ed., 45, p. 153 ; cp. 44. p. 321.

court, is the devil's bishop, the devil himself, nay, the excrement which the devil has . . . into the Church."[1]

One of Luther's most ardent defenders in the present day, Wilhelm Walther of Rostock, exonerates Luther from any mere imitation of the customary language of the peasants or the monks, for, strange to say, some have seen in his tone the influence of monasticism; he claims originality for Luther. "Such a mode of expression," he says, "was not in Luther's case the result of his peasant extraction or of his earlier life. For, far from becoming gradually less noticeable as years went on, it is most apparent in his old age."[2] It is plain that Luther's earlier Catholic life cannot be held responsible, nor the monastic state of celibacy, often misjudged though it has been in certain quarters. As regards the reassertion in him of the peasant's son, we are at liberty to think what we please. At any rate, we cannot but endorse what Walther says concerning the steady growth of the disorder; in all likelihood the applause which greeted his popular and vigorous style reacted on Luther and tended to confirm him in his literary habits. As years passed he grew more and more anxious that every word should strike home, and delighted in stamping all he wrote with the individuality of "rude Luther." Under the circumstances it was inevitable that his style should suffer.

Walther thinks he has found the real explanation in Luther's "energy of character" and the depth of his "moral feeling"; here, according to him, we have cause of his increasingly lurid language; Luther, "in his wish to achieve something," and to bring "his excellent ideas" home to the man in the street, of set purpose disregarded the "esthetic feelings of his readers" and his own "reputation as a writer." Melanchthon, says Walther, "took offence at his smutty language. Luther's reply was to make it smuttier still."

This line of defence is remarkable enough to deserve to be chronicled. From the historical standpoint, however, we should bear in mind that Luther had recourse to "smuttiness" not merely in theological and religious writings or when desirous of producing some effect with "his excellent

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 44, p. 296. In a sermon.

[2] Lutherophilus (Wilh. Walther), "Das sechste Gebot und Luthers Leben," 1893, p. 33 f.; and "Für Luther," p. 593 ff.

ideas." The bad habit clings to him quite as much elsewhere, and disfigures his most commonplace conversations and casual sallies.

Thus the psychological root of the problem lies somewhat deeper. We shall not be far wrong in believing, that a man who moved habitually amidst such impure imaginations, and gave unrestrained expression to statements of a character so offensive, bore within himself the cause. Luther was captain in a violent warfare on vows, religious rules, celibacy and many other ordinances and practices of the Church, which had formerly served as barriers against sensuality. Consciously or unconsciously his rude nature led him to cast off the fetters of shame which had once held him back from what was low and vulgar. After all, language is the sign and token of what is felt within. It was chiefly his own renunciation of the higher standard of life which led him to abandon politeness in speech and controversy, and, in word and imagery, to sink into ever lower depths. Such is most likely the correct answer to the psychological problem presented by the steady growth of this questionable element in his language.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche ("Werke," 7, p. 401) has a few words, not devoid of admiration for Luther, which, however, apply to the whole man and not merely to his habits of speech. They may well serve as a transition to what follows: "Luther's merit lies in this, that he possessed the courage of his sensuality—in those days tactfully described as the 'freedom of the Gospel.'"

### 5. On Marriage and Sexuality

Christianity, with its doctrine of chastity, brought into the heathen world a new and vital element. It not only inculcated the controlling of the sexual instinct by modesty and the fear of God, but, in accordance with the words of our Saviour and His Apostle, St. Paul, it represented voluntary renunciation of marriage and a virgin life as more perfect and meritorious in God's sight. What appeared so entirely foreign to the demands of nature, the Christian religion characterised as really not only attainable, but fraught with happiness for those who desired to follow the counsel of Christ and who trusted in the omnipotence of His grace.

The sublime example of our Lord Himself, of His Holy Mother, and of the disciple whom Jesus loved, also St. Paul's praise for virginity and the magnificent description in the Apocalypse of the triumphal throng of virgins who follow the Lamb, chanting a song given to them alone to sing—all this inspired more generous souls to tread with cheerfulness the meritorious though thorny path of continence. Besides these, countless millions, who did not choose to live unwedded, but were impelled by their circumstances to embrace the married state, learnt in the school of Christianity, with the help of God's grace, that in matrimony too it was possible for them to serve God cheerfully and to gain everlasting salvation.

### *The Necessity of Marriage.*

After having violated his monastic vows, Luther not only lost a true appreciation of the celibate state when undertaken for the love of God, but also became disposed to exaggerate the strength of the sexual instinct in man, to such an extent, that, according to him, extra-matrimonial misconduct was almost unavoidable to the unmarried. In this conviction his erroneous ideas concerning man's inability for doing what is good play a great part. He lays undue stress on the alleged total depravity of man and represents him as the helpless plaything of his evil desires and passions, until at last it pleases God to work in him. At the same time the strength of some of his statements on the necessity of marriage is due to controversial interests; to the desire to make an alluring appeal to the senses of those bound by vows or by the ecclesiastical state, to become unfaithful to the promises they had made to the Almighty. Unfortunately the result too often was that Luther's invitation was made to serve as an excuse for a life which did not comply even with the requirements of ordinary morality.

"As little as it is in my power," Luther proclaims, "that I am not a woman, so little am I free to remain without a wife."[1]

"It is a terrible thing," he writes with glaring exaggeration to Albert, Archbishop of Mayence, "for a man to be found without a wife in the hour of death; at the very least he should have an

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 276; Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 511. Sermon on the Married Life, 1522, i.e. long before his own marriage.

earnest purpose of getting married. For what will he say when God asks him : 'I made you a man, not to stand alone but to take a wife ; where then is your wife ?'"[1]

To another cleric who fancied himself compelled to marry, he writes in the year of his own wedding : "Your body demands and needs it ; God wills it and insists upon it."[2]

"Because they [the Papists] rejected marriage [!]," he says, "and opposed the ordinance of God and the clear testimony and witness of Scripture, therefore they fell into fornication, adultery, etc., to their destruction."[3]

"Just as the sun has no power to stop shining, so also is it implanted in human nature, whether male or female, to be fruitful. That God makes exceptions of some, as, for instance, on the one hand of the bodily infirm and impotent, and on the other of certain exalted natures, must be regarded in the same light as other miracles. . . . Therefore it is likewise not my will that such should marry."[4]

"A man cannot dispense with a wife for this reason : The natural instinct to beget children is as deeply implanted as that of eating and drinking." Hence it is that God formed the human body in the manner He did, which Luther thereupon proceeds to describe to his readers in detail.[5]

"Before marriage we are on fire and rave after a woman. . . . St. Jerome writes much of the temptations of the flesh. Yet that is a trivial matter. A wife in the house will remedy that malady. Eustochia [Eustochium] might have helped and counselled Jerome."[6]

One sentence of Luther's, which, as it stands, scarcely does honour to the female sex, runs as follows : "The Word and work of God is quite clear, viz. that women were made to be either wives or prostitutes."[7]

By this statement, which so easily lends itself to misunderstanding, Luther does not mean to put women in the alternative of choosing either marriage or vice. In another passage of the same writing he says distinctly, what he repeats also elsewhere : "It is certain that He [God] does not create any woman to be a prostitute." Still, it is undeniable that in the above passage, in his recommendation of marriage, he allows himself to be carried away to the use of untimely language.—In others of the passages cited he modifies his brutal proclamation of the force of the sexual craving, and the inevitable necessity of marriage, by statements to quite another effect, though these are scarcely noticeable amid the wealth of words which he expends in favour

[1] Letter of June 2, 1525, *ibid.*, 53, p. 311 ; Letters, ed. De Wette, 2, 676 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 186).

[2] To Reissenbusch, "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 276 f. ; Erl. ed., 53, p. 286 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 145).

[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 191.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 53 ff.

[5] *Ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 156=28, p. 199.

[6] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 196.

[7] "Werke," Weim. ed , 12, p. 94 ; Erl. ed., 51, p. 6.

of man's sensual nature; for instance, he speaks of the "holy virgins," who "live in the flesh as though not of the flesh, thanks to God's sublime grace."[1] "The grace of chastity"[2] was, he admits, sometimes bestowed by God, yet he speaks of the person who possesses it as a "prodigy of God's own";[3] such a one it is hard to find, for such a man is no "natural man."[4] Such extravagant stress laid on the fewness of these exceptions might, however, be refuted from his own words; for instance, he urges a woman whose husband is ill to do her best with the ordinary grace of God bestowed on her as on all others, and endure with patience the absence of marital intercourse. "God is much too just to rob you of your husband by sickness in this way without on the other hand taking away the wantonness of the flesh, if you on your part tend the sick man faithfully."[5]

That for most men it is more advisable to marry than to practise continence had never been questioned for a moment by Catholics, and if Luther had been speaking merely to the majority of mankind, as some have alleged he was, his very opponents could not but have applauded him. It is, however, as impossible to credit him with so moderate a recommendation as it is to defend another theory put forward by Protestants, viz. that his sole intention was to point out "that the man in whom the sexual instinct is at work cannot help being sensible of it."

His real view, as so frequently described by himself, is linked up to some extent with his own personal experiences after he had abandoned the monastic life. It can scarcely be by mere chance that a number of passages belonging here synchronise with his stay at the Wartburg, and that his admission to his friend Melanchthon ("I burn in the flames of my carnal desires . . . '*ferveo carne, libidine*'")[6] should also date from this time.

In an exposition often quoted from his course of sermons on Exodus, Luther describes with great exaggeration the violence and irresistibility of the carnal instinct in man, in order to conclude as usual that ecclesiastical celibacy is an abomination. His strange words, which might so readily be misunderstood, call for closer consideration than is usually accorded them; they, too, furnished a pretext for certain far-fetched charges against Luther.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed. 18, p. 276=53; p. 288; "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 2, p. 639 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 145).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 410=311=676 (to Archbishop Albert of Mayence).

[3] *Ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 279=16², p. 515, in sermon quoted above, p. 242, n. 1; Luther here speaks of "three kinds of men" whom God has exempted from matrimony.

[4] In the letter to the Archbishop of Mayence. "I speak of the natural man. With those to whom God gives the grace of chastity I do not interfere."

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 291 f.; Erl. ed., 16², p. 527 f. "Vom Eelichen Leben," 1522.

[6] Letter of July 13, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 189. Cp. our vol. ii., pp. 82 f., 94 f.

With the Sixth Commandment, says Luther, God "scolds, mocks and derides us"; this Commandment shows that the world is full of "adulterers and adulteresses," all are "whoremongers"; on account of our lusts and sensuality God accounted us as such and so gave us the Sixth Commandment; to a man of good conduct it would surely be an insult to say: "My good fellow, see you keep your plighted troth!" God, however, wished to show us "what we really are." "Though we may not be so openly before the world [i.e. adulterers and whoremongers], yet we are so at heart, and, had we opportunity, time and occasion, we should all commit adultery. It is implanted in all men, and no one is exempt . . . we brought it with us from our mother's womb."[1] Luther does not here wish to represent adultery as a universal and almost inevitable vice, or to minimise its sinfulness. Here, as so often elsewhere, he perceives he has gone too far and thereupon proceeds to explain his real meaning. "I do not say that we are so in very deed, but that such is our inclination, and it is the heart that God searches." Luther is quite willing to admit: "There are certainly many who do not commit fornication, but lead quite a good life"; "this is due either to God's grace, or to fear of Master Hans" (the hangman). "Our reason tells us that fornication, adultery and other sins are wrong. . . . All these laws are decreed by nature itself," just like the Commandment not to commit murder.[2] "But we are so mad," "when once our passions are aroused, that we forget everything." Hence we cannot but believe, that "even though our monks vowed chastity twice over," they were adulterers in God's sight. The conclusion he arrives at is: "Such being our nature, God forbids no one to take a wife."

The whole passage is only another instance of Luther's desire to magnify the consequences of original sin without making due allowance for the remedies provided by Christianity, the sacraments in particular. It is also in keeping with his usual method of clothing his attack on Catholicism in the most bitter and repulsive language, a method which gradually became a second nature to him.

In insisting on the necessity of marriage, Luther does not stop to consider that the Church of antiquity, for all her esteem for matrimony, was ever careful to see that the duties and interests of the individual, of the State and of the Church were respected, and not endangered by hasty marriages. Luther himself was not hampered by considerations of that sort, whether in the case of priests, monks or

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 16, p. 511; cp. p. 512.

[2] For other passages in which Luther inculcates either chastity or faithfulness in the married state, see, for instance, "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, pp. 298, 302; Erl. ed., $16^2$, pp. 132 f., 137, and "Colloq.," ed. Rebenstock, 2, p. 95; "*Deus omnipotens . . . castus*, etc., *castitatem diligit, pudicitiam et verecundiam ornat*," etc.

laymen. The unmarried state revolted him to such a degree, that he declares nothing offended his "ears more than the words nun, monk and priest," and that he looked on marriage as "a Paradise, even though the married pair lived in abject poverty."[1] A couple, who on account of their circumstances should hesitate to marry, he reproaches with a "pitiful want of faith." "A boy not later than the age of twenty, and a girl when she is from fifteen to eighteen years of age [ought to marry]. Then they are still healthy and sound, and they can leave it to God to see that their children are provided for."[2]

If we are to take him at his word, then a cleric ought to marry merely to defy the Pope. "For, even though he may have the gift so as to be able to live chastely without a wife, yet he ought to marry in defiance of the Pope, who insists so much on celibacy."[3]

### *The "Miracle" of Voluntary and Chaste Celibacy.*

Of the celibate and continent life Luther had declared (above, p. 242–3) that practically only a miracle could render it possible.[4] If we compare his statements on virginity, we shall readily see how different elements were warring within him. On the one hand he is anxious to uphold the plain words of Scripture, which place voluntary virginity above marriage. On the other, his conception of the great and, without grace, irresistible power of concupiscence draws him in the opposite direction. Moreover, man, being devoid of free will, and incapable of choosing of his own accord the higher path, in order not to fall a prey to his lusts, must resolutely embrace the married state intended by God for the generality of men. Then, again, we must not discount the change his views underwent after his marriage with a nun.

In view of the "malady" of "the common flesh," he says of the man who pledges himself to voluntary chastity, that "on account of this malady, marriage is necessary to

[1] To Nicholas Gerbel, Nov. 1, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 241, from the Wartburg. *Ibid.*: "*De votis religiosorum et sacerdotum Philippo et mihi est robusta conspiratio, tollendis et evacuandis videlicet. O sceleratum illum Antichristum cum squamis suis!*"

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 303 f.; Erl. ed., 16², p. 139.

[3] Erl. ed., 61, p. 167.

[4] See vol. ii., p. 115 ff., and vol. iv., xxii. 5.

him and it is not in his power to do without it; for his flesh rages, burns and tends to be fruitful as much as that of any other man, and he must have recourse to marriage as the necessary remedy. Such passion of the flesh God permits for the sake of marriage and for that of the progeny."[1]—And yet, according to another passage in Luther's writings, even marriage is no remedy for concupiscence: "Sensual passion ('*libido*') cannot be cured by any remedy, not even marriage, which God has provided as a medicine for weak nature. For the majority of married people are adulterers, and each says to the other in the words of the poet: 'Neither with nor without you can I live.'"[2] "Experience teaches us, that, in the case of many, even marriage is not a sufficient remedy; otherwise there would be no adultery or fornication, whereas, alas, they are only too frequent."[3]

It is merely a seeming contradiction to his words on the miraculous nature of virginity when Luther says on one occasion: "*Many* are to be met with who have this gift; I also had it, though with many evil thoughts and dreams,"[4] for possibly, owing to his reference to himself, modesty led him here to represent this rare and miraculous gift as less unusual. Here he speaks of "many," but usually of the "few." "We find so few who possess God's gift of chastity."[5] "They are rare," he says in his sermon on conjugal life, "and among a thousand there is scarcely one to be found, for they are God's own wonder-works; no man may venture to aspire to this unless God calls him in a special manner."[6]

Luther acknowledges that those in whom God works this "miracle"—who, while remaining unmarried, do not succumb to the deadly assaults of concupiscence—were to be esteemed fortunate on account of the happiness of the celibate state. It would be mere one-sidedness to dwell solely upon Luther's doctrine of the necessity and worth of marriage and not to consider the numerous passages in which he speaks in praise of voluntary and chaste celibacy.

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 114; Erl. ed., 51, p. 30. "1 Cor. vii.," 1523.

[2] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 1, p. 212. "Enarr. in Genesim," c. 3; "*Maior enim pars conjugatorum vivit in adulteriis,*" etc.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 302 *seq.*, in c. 4.

[4] "Werke," Erl. ed., 44, p. 148. Sermon on Matthew xviii. ff.

[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 115; Erl. ed., 51, p. 32. "1 Cor. vii.," etc.

[6] *Ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 279=16², p. 113. Sermon on Married Life.

He says in the sermon on conjugal life: "No state of life is to be regarded as more pleasing in the sight of God than the married state. The state of chastity is certainly better on earth as having less of care and trouble, not in itself, but because a man can give himself to preaching and the Word of God [1 Cor. vii. 34]. . . . In itself it is far less exalted."[1] In the following year, 1523, in his exposition of 1 Corinthians, chapter vii., St. Paul's declaration leads him to extol virginity: "Whoever has grace to remain chaste, let him do so and abstain from marriage and not take upon himself such trouble unless need enforce it, as St. Paul here counsels truly; for it is a great and noble freedom to be unmarried and saves one from much disquietude, vexation and trouble."[2] He even goes so far as to say: "It is a sweet, joyous and splendid gift, for him to whom it is given, to be chaste cheerfully and willingly,"[3] and for this reason in particular "is it a fine thing," because it enables us the better to serve the "Christian Churches, the Evangel and the preaching of the Word"; this is the case "when you refrain from taking a wife so as to be at peace and to be of service to the Kingdom of Heaven." The preacher, he explains, for instance, was not expected to ply a trade, for which reason also he received a stipend for preaching. "Hence, whoever wishes to serve the Churches and to enjoy greater quiet, would do well to remain without a wife, for then he would have neither wife nor child to support."[4] "Whoever has the gift of being able to live without a wife, is an angel on earth and leads a peaceful life."[5]

In this way Luther comes practically to excuse, nay, even to eulogise, clerical celibacy; elsewhere we again find similar ideas put forward.

In his Latin exposition of Psalm cxxviii. he says: "There must be freedom either to remain single or to marry. Who would force the man who has no need to marry to do so? Whoever is among those who are able 'to receive this word,' let him remain unmarried and glory in the Lord. . . . They who can do without marrying do well (*recte faciunt*) to abstain from it and not to burden themselves with the troubles it brings."[6] And again: "Whoever is set free by such a grace [a 'special and exalted grace of God'], let him thank God and obey it."[7] For "if we contrast the married state with virginity, chastity is undoubtedly a nobler gift than marriage, but, still, marriage is as much God's gift—so St. Paul tells us—as chastity."[8] Compared with the

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., p. 302=137.
[2] *Ibid.*, 12, p. 137=51, p. 63 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 99=10.
[4] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 44, p. 151 f. Sermon on Matthew xviii. ff.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 153, where he tells a tale of how St. Bernard and St. Francis made snow-women, "to lie beside them and thus subdue their passion."
[6] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 20, p. 126 *seq.*
[7] "Werke," Weim. ed., 24, p. 55; Erl. ed., 33, p. 59. Sermons on Genesis, 1527.
[8] *Ibid.*, 12, p. 104=51, p. 16 f. "1 Corinthians, vii.," etc.

chastity of marriage, "virgin chastity is more excellent (*virginalis castitas excellentior est*)."[1] "Celibacy is a gift of God and we commend both this and the married state in their measure and order. We do not extol marriage as though we should slight or repudiate celibacy."[2]

Usually Luther represents virginity as not indeed superior but quite equal to the married state: "To be a virgin or a spouse is a different gift; both are equally well pleasing to God."[3] As we might expect, we find the warmest appreciation of celibacy expressed before Luther himself began to think of marriage, whereas, subsequent to 1525, his strictures on celibacy become more frequent. In 1518, without any restriction, he has it that virginity is held to be the highest ornament and "an incomparable jewel"; in the case of religious, chastity was all the more precious because "they had of their own free will given themselves to the Lord."[4] In the following year, comparing the married state with virginity, he says that "virginity is better," when bestowed by the grace of God.[5]

"The breach with the past caused by his marriage," says M. Rade, was "greater and more serious" than any change effected in later years in matrimonial relationship.[6] By his advocacy of marriage, as against celibacy and his glorification of family life, Luther brought about "a reversal of all accepted standards."[7] Rade, not without sarcasm, remarks: "There is something humorous in the way in which Luther in his exposition of 1 Corinthians vii., which we have repeatedly had occasion to quote, after praising virginity ever passes on to the praise of the married state."[8] It is quite true that his interpretation seems forced, when he makes St. Paul, in this passage, extol continency, not on account of its "merit and value in God's sight," but merely for the "tranquillity and comfort it insures in this life."[9] To Luther it is of much greater interest, that St. Paul should be "so outspoken in his praise of the married state and should allude to it as a Divine gift." He at once proceeds

[1] "Opp. lat. exeg.," 6, p. 22. "Enarr. in Genesim," c. 24.
[2] *Ibid.*, 7, p. 286, in c. 30.
[3] *Ibid.*, 20, p. 131. "Enarr. in Ps. 128."
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 1, p. 488 f.; "Opp. lat. exeg.," 12, p. 160 *seqq.* "*Decem praecepta praedicata populo*," 1518.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2, p. 168; Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 62. Sermon on the conjugal state, 1519, "altered and corrected." Cp. also present work, vol. iv., xxii. 5.
[6] "Die Stellung des Christentums zum Geschlechtsleben," Tübingen, 1910, p. 40.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[9] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 137; Erl. ed., 51, p. 64.

to prove from this, that "the married state is the holiest state of all, and that certain states had been falsely termed 'religious' and others 'secular'; for the reverse ought to be the case, the married state being truly religious and spiritual."[1]

Luther's animus against celibacy became manifest everywhere. He refused to give sufficient weight to the Bible passages, to the self-sacrifice so pleasing to God involved in the unmarried state, or to its merits for time and for eternity. It is this animus which leads him into exaggeration when he speaks of the necessity of marriage for all men, and to utter words which contradict what he himself had said in praise of celibacy.

He paints in truly revolting colours the moral abominations of the Papacy, exaggerating in unmeasured terms the notorious disorders which had arisen from the infringement of clerical celibacy. His controversial writings contain disgusting and detailed descriptions of the crimes committed against morality in the party of his opponents; the repulsive tone is only rivalled by his prejudice and want of discrimination which lead him to believe every false report or stupid tale redounding to the discredit of Catholicism.

His conception of the rise of clerical celibacy is inclined to be hazy: "The celibacy of the clergy commenced in the time of Cyprian." Elsewhere he says that it began "in the time of Bishop Ulrich, not more than five hundred years ago."[2]

He assures us that "St. Ambrose and others did not believe that they were men."[3] "The infamous superstition [of celibacy] gave rise to, and promoted, horrible sins such as fornication, adultery, incest . . . also strange apparitions and visions. . . . What else could be expected of monks, idle and over-fed pigs as they were, than that they should have such fancies?"[4]—In the Pope's Ten Commandments there was, so he said, a sixth which ran: "Thou shalt not

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 104 f. = 16 ff.

[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 291. For proofs that the Western law of continence goes back to the early ages of the Church, and was spoken of even at the Synod of Elvira in 305 or 306, see my "History of Rome and the Popes in the Middle Ages" (Eng. Trans.), iii., p. 271 ff.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 298.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 297; "Colloq.," 2, p. 366 *seq.*

be unchaste, but force them to be so" (by means of vows and celibacy), and a ninth: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, but say, it is no sin."[1]

"Were all those living under the Papacy kneaded together, not one would be found who had remained chaste up to his fortieth year. Yet they talk much of virginity and find fault with all the world while they themselves are up to their ears in filth."[2]—"It pleases me to see the Saints sticking in the mud just like us. But it is true that God allows nature to remain, together with the spirit and with grace."[3]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 553 *seq.*; Erl ed., 28, p. 128.

[2] *Ibid.*, 24, p. 517=34, p. 139 f., in the Sermons on Genesis, 1527.

[3] *Ibid.*, 518=140. We may add some further statements characteristic of Luther's unseemly language on the necessity of marriage and the alleged abuses on the Catholic side. Of these passages the first two are for obvious reasons given in Latin.

"*Major pars puellarum in monasteriis positarum non potest voluntarie statum suum observare. . . . Puella non potest esse sine viro, sicut non sine esu, potu et somno. Ideo Deus dedit homini membra, venas, fluxus et omnia, quae ad generandum inserviunt. Qui his rebus obsistit, quid aliud facit, quam velle ut ignis non urat? . . . Ubi castitas involuntaria est, natura non desistit ab opere suo; caro semen concipit sicut creata est a Deo; venae secundum genus suum operantur. Tunc incipiunt fluxus et peccata clandestina, quae s. Paulus mollitiem vocat* (1 Cor. vi. 10). *Et, ut crude dicam, propter miseram necessitatem, quod non fluit in carnem, fluit in vestimenta. Id deinde accusare et confiteri verentur. . . Vide, hoc ipsum voluit diabolus, docens te coercere et domare naturam, quae non vult esse coacta*" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 156 f.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 199).

He had spoken in much the same way in the Tract against celibacy which preceded in 1521 his book on Monastic Vows, and which appeared again in the Church Sermons and also several times separately ("Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 694 ff.; Erl. ed., $10^2$, p. 448 ff.; Sermon on the Feast of the Three Kings, 1522): "*Ubi magna et coelestis gratia non assistit, oportet naturam secundum ordinem suum fluxus pati. Si non conveniunt vir et femina, natura tamen propriam viam sequitur et indignatur; ita ut melius sit masculum et feminam esse simul, sicut Deus (eos) creavit et natura vult. . . . Interrogo igitur, quid consilii dabis ei, qui se continere non potest? Si dicis, inhibitione utendum, respondeo, unum ex tribus secuturum esse: aut masculus et femina sese conjungent, ut placuerit sicuti nunc fit sub sacerdotibus papistarum, aut natura sponte sese solvet, aut, deficiente primo et secundo, sine cessatione homo uretur et clam patietur. Hoc modo creasti martyrium diabolicum, et fiet, ut vir mulieri deformissimae sese sociaret et mulier viro taedio simo prae malo impetu carnis. Ignoscant mihi aures pudicae, debeo tractare animi morbos, sicut medicus tractat stercus et latrinam. . . . Tu facis, ut ille pauper homo continuo corde peccet contra votum suum, et melius fortasse sit, quod masculus nonnunquam secum habeat femellam et femina juvenem. . . . At papa sinit eos fluxus pati, uri et torqueri sicut possunt, ita ut eos habeam pro infantibus immolatis a populo Israel idolo igneo Moloch ad concremandum. . . . Non vis impedire tandem aliquando, quominus fornicentur, fluxibus maculentur et urantur?*" *Ibid.*, p. 108=

*Luther's Loosening of the Marriage Tie.*

Luther, advocate and promoter of marriage though he was, himself did much to undermine its foundations, which must necessarily rest on its indissolubility and sanctity as ordained by Christ. In the six following cases which he enumerates he professes to find sufficient grounds for dissolving the marriage tie, overstepping in the most autocratic fashion the limits of what is lawful to the manifest detriment of matrimony.

He declares, first, that if one or other of the married parties should be convicted of obstinately refusing "to render the conjugal due, or to remain with the other," then "the marriage was annulled"; the husband might then say: "If you are unwilling, some other will consent; if the wife refuse, then let the maid come"; he had the full

462: *Si in singulis civitatibus forent vel quinque juvenes et quinque puellae viginti annorum, integri, sine fluxibus naturae, tunc dicerem, primitiva tempora apostolorum et martyrum rediisse. Nunc autem qualem Sodomam et Gomorrham fecit diabolus ubicunque plane per istam singularem castitatem votorum!*"

In the sermon on conjugal life, in 1522, he says: "It is true that the man who does not marry is obliged to sin. How can it be otherwise, seeing that God created man and woman to be fruitful and multiply? But why do we not forestall sin by marriage?" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 300; Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 537). In his latter years he penned the following attack upon the older Church of which the obscenity vies with its untruth: "The chaste Pope does not take a wife, yet all women are his. The lily-white, chaste, shamefaced, modest, Holy Father wears the semblance of chastity and refuses to take a wife honourably and in the sight of God; but how many other women he keeps, not only prostitutes, but married women and virgins, look at his Court of Cardinals, his Bishoprics, Foundations, Courtesans, Convents, Clergy, Chaplains, Schoolmasters and his whole curia, not to speak of countless unnamable sins. Well, may God give us His grace and punish both the Pope and Mohammed with all their devils!" ("Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 204, in the Preface to the writing: "Verlegung des Alcoran Bruder Richardi," 1542). It is simply an example of Luther's habitual misrepresentation when we read in one of his sermons dating from 1524 ("Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 667): "Up to this time marriage has been a despised state, being termed a state of easy virtue; but Scripture says: 'Male and female He created them' (Gen. i. 27): that is enough for us. In practice we all extol this state. Oh, that all men lived in it! Whoever has not been exempted by God, let him see that he finds his like [a spouse]." Upon himself he looked as one "exempted by God," at least he declared in several passages of this sermon, delivered in the very year of his marriage, that "by the Grace of God he did not desire a wife; I have no need of a wife, but must assist you in your necessity." He himself could not yet make up his mind to carry out what he urged so strongly upon others.

right to take an Esther and dismiss Vasthi, as King Assuerus had done (Esther ii. 17).[1] To the remonstrances of his wife he would be justified in replying: "Go, you prostitute, go to the devil if you please";[2] the injured party was at liberty to contract a fresh union, though only with the sanction of the authorities or of the congregation, while the offending party incurred the penalty of the law and might or might not be permitted to marry again.[3]

The words: "If you won't . . . then let the maid come" were destined to become famous. Not Catholics only, but Protestants too, found in them a stone of offence. As they stand they give sufficient ground for scandal. Was it, however, Luther's intention thereby to sanction relations with the maid outside the marriage bond? In fairness the question must be answered in the negative. Both before and after the critical passage the text speaks merely of the dissolution of the marriage and the contracting of another union; apart from this, as is clear from other passages, Luther never sanctioned sexual commerce outside matrimony. Thus, strictly speaking, according to him, the husband would only have the right to threaten the obstinate wife to put her away and contract a fresh union with the maid. At the same time the allusion to the maid was unfortunate, as it naturally suggested something different from marriage. In all probability it was the writer's inveterate habit of clothing his thought in the most drastic language at his command that here led him astray. It may be that the sentence "Then let the maid come" belonged to a rude proverb which Luther used without fully adverting to its actual meaning, but it has yet to be proved that such a proverb existed before Luther's day; at any rate, examples can be quoted of the words having been used subsequently as a proverb, on the strength of his

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 290; Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 526, in the Sermon on conjugal life, 1522.

[2] *Ibid.*, 10, 3, p. 222=23, p. 116 f., in the work "On marriage matters," to the pastors and preachers, 1530. Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 119.

[3] As regards the authorities, Luther's wish was that they should interfere in the matter from the outset, and that strongly, although he can scarcely have hoped to see this carried out in practice. "The authorities must either coerce the woman or put her to death. Should they not do this, the husband must imagine that his wife has been carried off by brigands and look about him for another" (*ibid.*).

example.[1]—It was on this, the first ground for the dissolution of marriage, that Luther based his decision in 1543, when one of the Professors turned preacher and his wife refused to follow him to his post at Frankfort-on-the-Oder, saying that "she wasn't going to have a parson." Luther then wrote: "I should at once leave her and marry another," should she categorically refuse compliance; in reality the authorities ought to coerce her, but unfortunately no authority "with '*executio*' existed, having power over the '*ministerium*.'"[2]

Secondly, according to Luther, the adultery of one party justified the other in assuming that the "guilty party was already *ipso facto* divorced"; "he can then act as though his spouse had died," i.e. marry again, though Christian considerations intimate that he should wait at least six months.[3]

Thirdly, if one party "will not suffer the other to live in a Christian manner," then the other, finding a separation from bed and board of no avail, has the right to "make a change," i.e. to contract another union. "But how," he asks, if this new spouse should turn out ill and try to force the other to live like a heathen, or in an unchristian manner, or should even run away; what then, supposing this thing went on three, four or even ten times?" Luther's answer to the conundrum is the same as before: "We cannot gag St. Paul, and therefore we cannot prevent those who desire to do so from making use of the freedom he allows." Luther's conviction was that the well-known passage in 1 Corinthians vii. 15 sanctioned this dangerous doctrine.[4]

Fourthly, if subsequent to the marriage contract one party should prove to be physically unfit for matrimony, then, according to Luther, the marriage might be regarded

[1] How the expression was at once taken up among Luther's opponents is plain from a letter of Duke George of Saxony to his representative at the Diet, Dietrich von Werthern, in F. Gess, "Akten und Briefe Georgs," etc., 1, p. 415. Cp. Weim ed., 10, 2, p. 290 n., and vol. iv., xxii. 5.

[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," ed. Kroker, p. 323 f.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 289; Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 525 f. Sermon on conjugal life.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 123; Erl. ed., 51, p. 44 n., in the work "Das sieb~dt Capitel S. Pauli zu den Corinthern aussgelegt," 1523.

as dissolved without any ecclesiastical suit solely by "conscience and experience." He would in that case advise, he says, that the woman, with the consent of the man, should enter into carnal relations with someone else, for instance, with her partner's brother, for her husband would really be no husband at all, but merely a sort of bachelor life-partner; this marriage might, however, be kept secret and the children be regarded as those of the putative father.[1] Even where it was not a question of impotence but of leprosy Luther decided in much the same way, without a word of reference to any ecclesiastical or legal suit: should the healthy party "be unable or unwilling to provide for the household" without a fresh marriage, and should the sick party "consent willingly to a separation," then the latter was simply to be looked upon as dead, the other party being free to re-marry."[2]

To these grounds of separation Luther, however, added a fifth. He declared, on the strength of certain biblical passages, that marriage with the widow of a brother—for which, on showing sufficient grounds, it was possible to obtain a dispensation in the Catholic Church—was invalid under all circumstances, and that therefore any person married on the strength of such a dispensation might conclude a fresh union. At first, in 1531, such was not his opinion, and he declared quite valid the marriage of Henry VIII. with his sister-in-law Catherine of Aragon, which was the outcome of such a dispensation; later on, however, in 1536, on ostensibly biblical grounds he discarded the Catholic view.[3]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 278; Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 515. She was to say: "Permit me to enter into a secret marriage with your brother, or your best friend," etc. Luther is speaking of the case "where a healthy woman had an impotent husband," etc. He here refers to the similar answer he had already given in his work: "On the Babylonish Captivity" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 558; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 98 *seq.*

[2] To Joachim von Weissbach, August 23, 1527, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 406 f. ("Briefwechsel," 6, p. 80). In 1540 he says: "*Ego concessi privatim aliquot coniugibus, qui leprosum vel leprosam haberent, ut alium ducerent.*" Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 141. In a sermon of 1524 he says coarsely of an impotent wife: "I would not have such a one beside me" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 560). The marriage bond was also dissolved where husband or wife had become impotent "owing to an evil spell"; his convictions forced him to teach this (*ibid.*, p. 562).

[3] Letter of February 16, 1542, "Briefe," 5, p. 436; cp. *ibid.*, p. 584. The question was thoroughly gone into by Rockwell, "Die Doppelehe

His views, not here alone but elsewhere, on matrimonial questions, were founded on an altogether peculiar interpretation of Scripture; he sought in Scripture for the proofs he wished to find, interpreting the Sacred Text in utter disregard of the teaching of its best authorised exponents and the traditions of the Church. The consequences of such arbitrary exegetical study he himself described characteristically enough. Speaking of Carlstadt, who, like him, was disposed to lay great stress on Old-Testament examples and referring to one of his matrimonial decisions which he was not disposed to accept, Luther exclaims: "Let him [Carlstadt] do as he pleases; soon we shall have him introducing circumcision at Orlamünde and making Mosaists of them all."[1]

Yet he was perfectly aware of the danger of thus loosening the marriage tie. He feared that fresh grounds for severing the same would be invented day by day.[2] On one occasion he exclaims, as though to stifle his rising scruples, that it was clear that all God cares for is "faith and confession. . . . It does not matter to Him whether you dismiss your wife and break your word. For what is it to Him whether you do so or not? But because you owe a duty to your neighbour," for this reason only, i.e. on account of the rights of others, it is wrong.[3] These strange words, which have often been misunderstood and quoted against Luther by polemics, were naturally not intended to question the existence of the marriage tie, but they are dangerous in so far as they do not make sufficient account of the nature of the commandment and the sin of its breach.

Most momentous of all, however, was the sixth plea in favour of divorce, an extension of those already mentioned. Not merely the apostasy of one party or his refusal to live with the Christian party, justified the other to contract a fresh union, but even should he separate, or go off, "for

Philipps von Hessen," 1904, p. 202 ff., who says: "About 1536 a change took place in the attitude of the Wittenbergers towards marriage with relatives-in-law" (p. 216). "Thus it is evident that Luther's views underwent a change" (p. 217). For the answer to the question how far this change was due to the hope of winning over Henry VIII. to the New Evangel, see vol. iv., xxi. 1.

[1] To Chancellor Brück, January 27, 1524, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 283.

[2] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 380 *seq.*

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 131; Erl. ed., 51, p. 55. "Das siebẽdt Capitel."

any reason whatever, for instance, through anger or dislike." Should "husband or wife desert the other in this way, then Paul's teaching [!] was to be extended so far . . . that the guilty party be given the alternative either to be reconciled or to lose his spouse, the innocent party being now free and at liberty to marry again in the event of a refusal. It is unchristian and heathenish for one party to desert the other out of anger or dislike, and not to be ready patiently to bear good and ill, bitter and sweet with his spouse, as his duty is, hence such a one is in reality a heathen and no Christian."[1]

Thus did Luther write, probably little dreaming of the incalculable confusion he was provoking in the social conditions of Christendom by such lax utterances. Yet he was perfectly acquainted with the laws to the contrary. He declaims against "the iniquitous legislation of the Pope, who, in direct contravention of this text of St. Paul's (1 Cor. vii. 15), commands and compels such a one, under pain of the loss of his soul, not to re-marry, but to await either the return of the deserter or his death," thus "needlessly driving the innocent party into the danger of unchastity." He also faces, quite unconcernedly, the difficulty which might arise should the deserter change his mind and turn up again after his spouse had contracted a new marriage. He is simply to be disregarded and discarded . . . and serve him right for his desertion. As matters now are the Pope simply leaves the door open for runaways."[2]

The new matrimonial legislator refuses to see that he is paving the way for the complete rupture of the marriage tie. If the mere fact of one party proving disinclined to continue in the matrimonial state and betaking himself elsewhere is sufficient to dissolve a marriage, then every barrier falls, and, to use Luther's own words of the Pope a little further, "it is no wonder that the world is filled with broken pledges and forsaken spouses, nay, with adultery which is just what the devil is aiming at by [such a] law."[3]

On the other hand, Luther, in his reforms, attacks those matrimonial impediments which, from the earliest Christian

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 124 f.; Erl. ed., 51, p. 45 f. "Das siebẽdt Capitel."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 124=44 f.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 124=45.

times, had always been held to invalidate marriages. The marriage of a Christian with a heathen or a Jew he thinks perfectly valid, though, as was to be expected, he does not regard it with a friendly eye. We are not to trouble at all about the Pope's pronouncements concerning invalidity: "Just as I may eat and drink, sleep and walk, write and treat, talk and work with a pagan or a Jew, a Turk or a heretic, so also can I contract a marriage with him. Therefore pay no heed to the fool-laws forbidding this." "A heathen is just as much a man or woman as St. Peter, St. Paul or St. Lucy."[1]

M. Rade, the Protestant theologian quoted above, considers that on the question of divorce Luther took up "quite a different attitude," and "opened up new prospects" altogether at variance with those of the past.[2] By his means was brought about a "complete reversal of public opinion on the externals of sexual life"; in this connection to speak of original sin was in reality mere "inward contradiction." Such were, according to him, the results of the "Christian freedom" proclaimed by Luther.[3]

August Bebel, in his book "Die Frau und der Sozialismus," says of Luther: "He put forward, regarding matrimony, views of the most radical character."[4] "In advocating liberty with regard to marriage, what he had in mind was the civil marriage such as modern German legislation sanctions, together with freedom to trade and to move from place to place."[5] "In the struggle which it now wages with clericalism social democracy has the fullest right to appeal to Luther, whose position in matrimonial matters was entirely unprejudiced. Luther and the reformers even went further in the marriage question, out of purely utilitarian motives and from a desire to please the rulers concerned, whose powerful support and lasting favour they were desirous of securing and retaining. Landgrave Philip I. of Hesse, who was well disposed towards the reformation," etc. etc.[6]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 519.
[2] Op. cit., above, p. 249, n. 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[4] "Die Frau und der Sozialismus,"[19] Stuttgart, 1893, p. 61.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 61. On Philip of Hesse, see vol. iv., xxi. 2.

*Polygamy.*

Sanctity of marriage in the Christian mind involves monogamy. The very word polygamy implies a reproach. Luther's own feelings at the commencement revolted against the conclusions which, as early as 1520, he had felt tempted to draw from the Bible against monogamy, for instance, from the example of the Old Testament Patriarchs, such as Abraham, whom Luther speaks of as "a true, indeed a perfect Christian."[1] It was not long, however, before he began to incline to the view that the example of Abraham and the Patriarchs did, as a matter of fact, make polygamy permissible to Christians.

In September, 1523, in his exposition on Genesis xvi., he said without the slightest hesitation: "We must take his life [Abraham's] as an example to be followed, provided it be carried out in the like faith"; of course, it was possible to object, that this permission of having several wives had been abrogated by the Gospel; but circumcision and the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb had also been abrogated, and yet they "are not sins, but quite optional, i.e. neither sinful nor praiseworthy. . . . The same must hold good of other examples of the Patriarchs, namely, if they had many wives, viz. that this also is optional."[2]

In 1523 he advanced the following: "A man is not absolutely forbidden to have more than one wife; I could not prevent it, but certainly I should not counsel it." He continues in this passage: "Yet I would not raise the question but only say, that, should it come before the sheriff, it would be right to answer that we do not reject the example of the Patriarchs, as though they were not right in doing what they did, as the Manicheans say."[3]

The sermons where these words occur were published at Wittenberg in 1527 and at once scattered broadcast in several editions. We shall have to tell later how the Landgrave Philip of Hesse expressly cited on his own behalf the passage we have quoted.

Meanwhile, however, i.e. previous to the printing of his sermons on Genesis, Luther had declared, in a memorandum

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 559; "Op. lat. var.," 6, p. 100, "De captivitate babylonica," 1520, "*an liceat, non audeo definire.*"
[2] *Ibid.*, 24, p. 304; Erl. ed., 33, p. 323. Sermons on Genesis.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 305=324; on the date see Weim. ed., 14, p. 250 ff.

of January 27, 1524, addressed to Brück, the electoral Chancellor, regarding a case in point, viz. that of an Orlamünde man who wished to have two wives, that he was "unable to forbid it"; it "was not contrary to Holy Scripture"; yet, on account of the scandal and for the sake of decorum, which at times demanded the omission even of what was lawful, he was anxious not to be the first to introduce amongst Christians "such an example, which was not at all becoming"; should, however, the man, with the assistance of spiritual advisers, be able to form a "firm conscience by means of the Word," then the "matter might well be left to take its course."[1] This memorandum, too, also came to the knowledge of Landgrave Philip of Hesse.[2]

Subsequently Luther remained faithful to the standpoint that polygamy was not forbidden but optional; this is proved by his Latin Theses of 1528,[3] by his letter, on September 3, 1531,[4] addressed to Robert Barnes for Henry VIII. and in particular by his famous declaration of 1539 to Philip of Hesse, sanctioning his bigamy.

His defenders have taken an unfinished treatise which he commenced in the spring of 1542[5] as indicating, if not a retractation, at least a certain hesitation on his part; yet even here he shows no sign of embracing the opposite view; in principle he held fast to polygamy and merely restricts it to the domain of conscience. The explanation of the writing must be sought for in the difficulties arising out of the bigamy of Landgrave Philip. Owing to Philip's representations Luther left the treatise unfinished, but on this occasion he expressly admitted to the Prince, that there were "four good reasons" to justify his bigamy.[6]

Needless to say, views such as these brought Luther into conflict with the whole of the past.

Augustine, like the other Fathers, had declared that polygamy was "expressly forbidden" in the New Testa-

[1] "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 283: "*Viro qui secundam uxorem consilio Carlstadii petit.*"

[2] The Elector forwarded it together with a letter to Philip of Hesse on July 3, 1540. See Enders, "Briefwechsel," *ibid.*, No. 5.

[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 523; "Opp. lat. var.," 4, p. 368, in the "*Propositiones de digamia episcoporum.*"

[4] "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 92 ff.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 206 ff.

[6] Thus Landgrave Philip, on May 16, 1542, to his theologian Bucer (Lenz, "Philipps Briefwechsel," 2, p. 82).

ment as a "crime" ("*crimen*").[1] Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure speak in similar terms in the name of the scholasticism of the Middle Ages. Peter Paludanus, the so-called "*Doctor egregius*" († 1342), repeated in his work on the Sentences, that: "Under the Gospel-dispensation it never had been and never would be permitted."[2]

It is, however, objected that Cardinal Cajetan, the famous theologian and a contemporary of Luther, had described polygamy as allowable in principle, and that Luther merely followed in his footsteps. But Cajetan does not deny that the prohibition pronounced by the Church stands, he merely deals in scholastic fashion with the questions whether polygamy is a contravention of the natural law, and whether it is expressly interdicted in Holy Scripture. True enough, however, he answers both questions in the negative.[3] In the first everything of course depends on the view taken with regard to the patriarchs and the Old Testament exceptions; the grounds for these exceptions (for such they undoubtedly were) have been variously stated by theologians. In the second, i.e. in the matter of Holy Scripture, Cajetan erred. His views on this subject have never been copied and, indeed, a protest was at once raised by Catharinus, who appealed to the whole body of theologians as teaching that, particularly since the preaching of the Gospel, there was no doubt as to the biblical prohibition.[4]

Thus, in spite of what some Protestants have said, it was not by keeping too close to the mediæval doctrine of matrimony, that Luther reached his theory of polygamy.

It is more likely that he arrived at it owing to his own

[1] "De bono coniugali," c. 15; "P.L.," 40, col. 385: "*nunc certe non licet.*" "Contra Faustum," l. 22, c. 47; "P.L.," 42, col. 428: "*nunc crimen est.*"

[2] "In IV. Sent.," Dist. 33, q. 1, a. 1.

[3] "Commentarii in Pentateuchum," Romae, 1531, f. 38′; "Commentarii in Evangelia," Venet., 1530, f. 77; "Epistolae s. Pauli enarr.," etc., Venet. 1531, f. 142.

[4] Ambr. Catharinus, "Annotationes in Comment. Cajetani," Lugd., 1542, p. 469, "*In hoc prorsus omnes theologi, neminem excipio, consenserunt.*" Cp. Paulus, "Luther und die Polygamie" ("Lit. Beilage der Köln. Volksztng.," 1903, No. 18), and in "Cajetan und Luther über Polygamie" (Hist.-pol. Blätter, 135, 1905, p. 81 ff.). On the opinions in vogue regarding the Old Testament exceptions, see Hurter, "Theol. spec.,"[11] P. ii., 1903, p. 567, n. 605. Cp. Rockwell, "Die Doppelehe Philipps von Hessen," p. 236 ff.

arbitrary and materialistic ideas on marriage. It was certainly not the Catholic Church which showed him the way; as she had safeguarded the sanctity of marriage, so also she protected its monogamous character and its indissolubility. In Luther's own day the Papacy proved by its final pronouncement against the adultery of Henry VIII. of England, that she preferred to lose that country to the Church rather than sanction the dissolving of a rightful marriage (vol. iv., xxi. 1).

*Toleration for Concubinage? Matrimony no Sacrament.*

In exceptional cases Luther permitted those bound to clerical celibacy, on account of "the great distress of conscience," to contract "secret marriages"; he even expressly recommended them to do so.[1] These unions, according to both Canon and Civil law, amounted to mere concubinage. Luther admits that he had advised "certain parish priests, living under the jurisdiction of Duke George or the bishops," to "marry their cook secretly."[2]

At the same time, in this same letter written in 1540, he explains that he is not prepared to "defend all he had said or done years ago, particularly at the commencement." Everything, however, remained in print and was made use of not only by those to whom it was actually addressed, but by many others also; for instance, his outrageous letter to the Knights of the Teutonic Order who were bound by vow to the celibate state. Any of them who had a secret, illicit connection, and "whoever found it impossible to live chastely," he there says, "was not to despair in his weakness and sin, nor wait for any Conciliar permission, for I would rather overlook it, and commit to the mercy of God the man who all his life has kept a pair of prostitutes, than the man who takes a wife in compliance with the decrees of such Councils." "How much less a sinner do you think him to be, and nearer to the grace of God, who keeps a prostitute, than the man who takes a wife in that way?"[3]

Of the Prince-Abbots, who, on account of the position they occupied in the Empire, were unable to marry so long as

[1] Letter to the Elector of Saxony, 1540, reprinted by Seidemann in Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 198. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Letter of December, 1523, "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 237 f.; Erl. ed., 29, p. 16 ("Briefwechsel," 4, p. 266). For the letters, to the Teutonic Order and concerning the Abbots, cp. our vol. ii., p. 120.

they remained in the monastery, he likewise wrote: "I would prefer to advise such a one to take a wife secretly and to continue as stated above [i.e. remain in office], seeing that among the Papists it is neither shameful nor wrong to keep women, until God the Lord shall send otherwise as He will shortly do, for it is impossible for things to remain much longer as they are. In this wise the Abbot would be safe and provided for."[1]

Here again we see how Luther's interest in promoting apostasy from Rome worked hand in hand with the lax conception he had been led to form of marriage.

Of any sacrament of matrimony he refused to hear. To him marriage was really a secular matter, however much he might describe it as of Divine institution: "Know, that marriage is an outward, material thing like any other secular business."[2] "Marriage and all that appertains to it is a temporal thing and does not concern the Church at all, except in so far as it affects the conscience."[3] "Marriage questions do not concern the clergy or the preachers, but the authorities; theirs it is to decide on them"; this, the heading of one of the chapters of the German Table-Talk, rightly describes its contents.[4]

In Luther's denial of the sacramental character of matrimony lies the key to the arbitrary manner in which, as shown by the above, he handled the old ecclesiastical marriage law. It was his ruling ideas on faith and justification which had led him to deny that it was a sacrament. The sacraments, in accordance with this view, have no other object or effect than to kindle in man, by means of the external sign, that faith which brings justification. Now marriage, to his mind, was of no avail to strengthen or inspire such faith. As early as 1519 he bewails the lack in matrimony of that Divine promise which sets faith at work ("*quae fidem exerceat*"),[5] and in his Theses of February 13, 1520, he already shows his disposition to question its right to be termed a sacrament.[6] In his work "On the Babylonish Captivity" of the same year he bluntly denies its

[1] To the Elector Johann of Saxony, May 25, 1529, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 75 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 102).
[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, 283; Erl. ed., $16^2$, p. 559.
[3] *Ibid.*, Erl. ed., 61, p. 219.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] To Spalatin, December 18, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 2, p. 278 f.
[6] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 96 f.

sacramental character, urging that the Bible was silent on the subject, that matrimony held out no promise of salvation to be accepted in faith, and finally that it was in no way specifically Christian, since it had already existed among the heathen.[1] He ignores all that the Fathers had taught regarding marriage as a sacrament, with special reference to the passage in Ephesians v. 31 ff., and likewise the ancient tradition of the Church as retained even by the Eastern sects separated from Rome since the fifth century.

In advocating matrimony, instead of appealing to it as a sacrament, he lays stress on its use as a remedy provided by God against concupiscence, and on its being the foundation of that family life which is so pleasing to God. Incidentally he also points out that it is a sign of the union of Christ with the congregation.[2]

Luther did not, as has been falsely stated, raise marriage to a higher dignity than it possessed in the Middle Ages. No more unjustifiable accusation has been brought against Catholic ages than that marriage did not then come in for its due share of recognition, that it was slighted and even regarded as sinful. Elsewhere we show that the writings dating from the close of the Middle Ages, particularly German sermonaries and matrimonial handbooks, are a direct refutation of these charges.[3]

### *Luther on Matters Sexual.*

Examples already cited have shown that, in speaking of sexual questions and of matters connected with marriage, Luther could adopt a tone calculated to make even the plainest of plain speakers wince. It is our present duty to examine more carefully this quality in the light of some quotations. Let the reader, if he chooses, look up the sermon of 1522, "On Conjugal Life," and turn to pages 58, 59, 61, 72, 76, 83, 84; or to pages 34, 35, 139, 143, 144, 146, 152, etc., of his Exposition of Corinthians.[4] We are compelled to ask: How many theological or spiritual writers, in sermons intended for the masses, or in vernacular works, ever ventured to discuss sexual matters with the nakedness

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 6, p. 550 ff.; "Opp. lat. var.," 5, p. 88 *seq.*
[2] Cp. Köstlin, "Luthers Theologie," $2^2$, pp. 307 f., 311.
[3] See vol. iv., xxii. 5.
[4] In the first Erl. ed., vol. 20 (in the 2nd edition, vol. 16, p. 508 ff); The Exposition in vol. 51, p. 1 ff.

that Luther displays in his writing "Wyder den falsch genantten geystlichen Standt des Bapst und der Bischoffen" (1522), in which through several pages Luther compares, on account of its celibacy, the Papacy with the abominable Roman god Priapus.[1] In this and like descriptions he lays himself open to the very charge which he brings against the clergy: "They seduce the ignorant masses and drag them down into the depths of unchastity."[2] He thus compares Popery to this, the most obscene form of idolatry, with the purpose of placing before the German people in the strongest and most revolting language the abomination by which he will have it that the Papacy has dishonoured and degraded the world, through its man-made ordinances. Yet the very words in which he wrote, quite apart from their blatant untruth, were surely debasing. In the same writing he also expresses himself most unworthily regarding the state of voluntary celibacy and its alleged moral and physical consequences.[3]

Here again it has been urged on Luther's behalf, that people in his day were familiar with such plain speaking. Yet Luther himself felt at times how unsuitable, nay, revolting, his language was, hence his excuses to his hearers and readers for his want of consideration, and also his attempt to take shelter in Holy Writ.[4] That people then were ready to put up with more in sermons is undeniable. Catholic preachers are to be met with before Luther's day who, although they do not speak in the same tone as he, do go very far in their well-meant exhortations regarding sexual matters, for instance, regarding the conjugal due in all its moral bearings. Nor is it true to say that such things occur only in Latin outlines or sketches of sermons, intended for preacher rather than people, for they are also to be found in German sermons actually preached. This disorder even called forth a sharp rebuke from a Leipzig theologian who was also a great opponent of Luther's, viz. Hieronymus

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 2, p. 118 ff.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 158 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 127=165.

[3] The passage was given above, p. 251, n. 3. Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 694; Erl. ed., $10^2$, p. 448.

[4] Appeal to the Old Testament: "Werke," Weim. ed., 10, 1, 1, p. 694; Erl. ed., $10^2$, p. 448, with the addition: "We are ashamed where there is no need for shame." *Ibid.*, 10, 2, p. 118=28, p. 158; St. Peter's words (2 Peter ii. 1 ff.) obliged him to paint as it deserved the virtue of our clerical squires.

Dungersheim.[1]—In none of the Catholic preachers thus censured, do we, however, find quite the same seasoning we find in Luther, nor do they have recourse to such, simply to spice their rhetoric or their polemics, or to air new views on morality.

His contemporaries even, more particularly some Catholics, could not see their way to repeat what he had said on sexual matters.[2] "It must be conceded" that Luther's language on sexual questions was "at times repulsively outspoken, nay, coarse, and that not only to our ears but even to those of his more cultured contemporaries." Thus a Protestant writer.[3] Another admits with greater reserve: "There are writings of Luther's in which he exceeds the limits of what was then usual."[4]

Certain unseemly anecdotes from the Table-Talk deserve to be mentioned here; told in the course of conversation while the wine-cup went the rounds, they may well be reckoned as instances of that "buffoonery" for which Melanchthon reproves Luther. Many of them are not only to be found in Bindseil's "*Colloquia*" based on the Latin collection of Lauterbach, and in the old Latin collection of Rebenstock, but have left traces in the original notes of the Table-Talk, for instance, in those of Schlaginhaufen and Cordatus. It is not easy to understand why Luther should have led the conversation to such topics; in fact, these improper stories and inventions would appear to have merely served the company to while away the time.

For example, Luther amuses the company with the tale of a Spandau Provost who was a hermaphrodite, lived in a nunnery and bore a child;[5] with another, of a peasant, who, after listening to a sermon on the use of Holy Water as a detergent of sin, proceeded to put what he had heard into practice in an indecent fashion;[6] with another of self-mutilated eunuchs, in telling which he is unable to suppress an obscene joke concerning himself.[7] He entertains the company with some far from witty,

[1] "*Tractatus de modo dicendi et docendi ad populum*," printed at Landshut, 1514, pars 2, cap. 1.

[2] His Catholic pupil Oldecop says in his "Chronicle" (p. 191), that he would not repeat Luther's "shameful words" on the Sixth Commandment.

[3] R. Seeberg, "Luther und Lutherthum in der neuesten kath. Beleuchtung,"[2] 1904, p. 19. [4] W. Walther, "Für Luther," p. 616.

[5] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 90.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 49. [7] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 177 f.

indeed entirely tactless and indecent stories, for instance, about the misfortune of a concubine who had used ink in mistake for ointment ;[1] of the Beghine who, when violence was offered her, refused to scream because silence was enjoined after Compline ;[2] of a foolish young man's interview with his doctor ;[3] of an obscene joke at the expense of a person uncovered ;[4] of a young man's experience with his bathing dress ;[5] of women who in shameless fashion prayed for a husband ;[6] of the surprise of Duke Hans, the son of Duke George of Saxony, by his steward, etc.[7]

These stories, in Bindseil's "Colloquia," are put with the filthy verses on Lemnius,[8] the "*Merdipoeta*," and form a fit sequence to the account of Lustig, the cook, and the substitute he used for sauces.[9]

These anecdotes are all related more or less in detail, but, apart from them, we have plentiful indelicate sayings and jokes and allusions to things not usually mentioned in society, sufficient in fact to fill a small volume.

Luther, for instance, jests in unseemly fashion "amid laughter" on the difference in mind and body which distinguishes man from woman, and playfully demonstrates from the formation of their body that his Catherine and women in general must necessarily be deficient in wit.[10] An ambiguous sally at the expense of virginity and the religious life, addressed to the ladies who were usually present at these evening entertainments, was received with awkward silence and a laugh.[11]

On another occasion the subject of the conversation was the female breasts, it being queried whether they were "an ornament" or intended for the sake of the children.[12] Then again Luther, without any apparent reason, treats, and with great lack of delicacy, of the circumstances and difficulties attending confinement;[13] he also enters fully into the troubles of pregnancy,[14] and, to fill up an interval, tells a joke concerning the womb of the Queen of Poland.[15]

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 426. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 430.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 431. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 432. [5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*, 436. [7] *Ibid.*, 432 *seq.* [8] *Ibid.*, p. 432.
[9] *Ibid.*, 430. In Rebenstock's Latin version : "*Cocus jocundus . . . cum carnem . . . non poterat*, etc., *anu illam conspurcaviscat.*"
[10] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 8 : "*Ridens sapientiam, qua esse volebat sua Catharina : Creator formavit masculum lato pectore et non latis femoribus, ut capax sedes sapientiae esset in viro ; latrinam vero, qua stercora eiciuntur, ei parvam fecit. Porro haec in femina sunt inversa. Ideo multum habent stercorum mulieres, sapientiae autem parum.*" Such passages do not tend to the higher appreciation of the female sex with which Luther has been credited.
[11] "*Ego quaero quare mulieres non optant fieri virgines ? Et tacuerunt omnes et omnes siluerunt ridentes.*" *Ibid.*, p. 177 f.
[12] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 166. [13] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[14] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 74.
[15] Lauterbach, *ibid.*, p. 185. Cp. Cordatus, p. 286 ; "*Eunuchi plus omnibus ardent nam appetitus castratione non perit, sed potentia.* Ich wolt mir lieber zwey paar ° [thus the Halle MS. =*testiculos*] ansetzen lassen, denn eins ausschneiden.'

In the Table-Talk Luther takes an opportunity of praising the mother's womb and does so with a striking enthusiasm, after having exclaimed: "No one can sufficiently extol marriage." "Now, in his old age," he understood this gift of God. Every man, yea, Christ Himself, came from a mother's womb.[1]

Among the passages which have been altered or suppressed in later editions from motives of propriety comes a statement in the Table-Talk concerning the Elector Johann Frederick, who was reputed a hard drinker. In Aurifaber's German Table-Talk the sense of the passage is altered, and in the old editions of Stangwald and Selnecker the whole is omitted.[2]

Of the nature of his jests the following from notes of the Table-Talk gives a good idea: "It will come to this," he said to Catherine Bora, "that a man will take more than one wife. The Doctoress replied: 'Tell that to the devil!' The Doctor proceeded: Here is the reason, Katey: a wife can have only one child a year, but the husband several. Katey replied: 'Paul says: "Let everyone have his own wife." Whereupon the Doctor retorted: 'His own,' but not 'only one,' that you won't find in Paul. The Doctor teased his wife for a long time in this way, till at last she said: 'Sooner than allow this, I would go back to the convent and leave you with all the children.'"[3]

When the question of his sanction of Philip of Hesse's bigamy and the scandal arising from it came under discussion, his remarks on polygamy were not remarkable for delicacy. He says: "Philip (Melanchthon) is consumed with grief about it. . . . And yet of what use is it? . . . I, on the contrary am a hard Saxon and a peasant. . . . The Papists could have seen how innocent we are, but they refused to do so, and so now they may well look the Hessian '*in anum.*' . . . Our sins are pardonable, but those of the Papists, unpardonable; for they are contemners of Christ, have crucified Him afresh and defend their blasphemy wittingly and wilfully. What are they trying to get out of it [the bigamy]? They slay men, but we work for our living and marry many wives." "This he said with a merry air and amid much laughter," so the chronicler relates. "God is determined to vex the people, and if it comes to my turn I shall give them the best advice and tell them to look Marcolfus '*in anum*,'" etc.[4] On rising from table he said very cheerfully: "I will not give the devil and the Papists a chance of making me uneasy. God will put it right, and to Him we must commend the whole Church."[5] By such trivialities did he seek to escape his burden of oppression.

[1] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen" (Kroker), p. 82. Said in 1540.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 373. In 1536. "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 361: "Wer nicht Wunder, so er *venereus* wer, das er sein Freulein todtgearbeitet hette."

[3] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 69.

[4] The reference to the Hessian is founded on a popular tale of Marcolfus and King Solomon. See Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 526.

[5] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 117 f. Cp. in the Table-Talk of the Mathesius Collection, ed. Kroker, p. 156 f., a similar account of this conversation dating from 1540, 11–19 June. It begins: "*Ego*

On one occasion he said he was going to ask the Elector to give orders that everybody should "fill themselves with drink"; then perhaps they would abandon this vice, seeing that people were always ready to do the opposite of what was commanded; what gave rise to this speech on drinking was the arrival of three young men, slightly intoxicated, accompanied by a musical escort. The visitors interrupted the conversation, which had turned on the beauty of women.[1]

Many of Luther's letters, as well as his sermons, lectures and Table-Talk, bear sad witness to his unseemly language. It may suffice here to mention one of the most extraordinary of these letters, while incidentally remarking, that, from the point of view of history, the passages already cited, or yet to be quoted, must be judged of in the light of the whole series, in which alone they assume their true importance. In a letter written in the first year of his union, to his friend Spalatin, who though also a priest was likewise taking a wife, he says: "The joy at your marriage and at my own carries me away"; the words which follow were omitted in all the editions (Aurifaber, De Wette, Walch), Enders being the first to publish them from the original. They are given in the note below.[2]

Luther himself was at times inclined to be ashamed of his ways of speaking, and repeatedly expresses regret, without, however, showing any signs of improvement. We read in Cordatus's Diary that (in 1527, during his illness) "he asked pardon for the frivolous words he had often spoken

*occallui sum rusticus et durus Saxo* [a pun on the Latin word] *ad eiusmodi* × " (Luther probably made use of a word against which the pen of the writer revolted. Kroker's note). Later: "*Ipsi* (*papistae*) *occidunt homines, nos laboramus pro vita et ducimus plures uxores.*" The end of this discourse, as Loesche and Kroker have shown, contains verbal reminiscences of Terence, with whom Luther must have been well acquainted from the days of his youth.

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," Kroker, p. 373.

[2] "*Saluta tuam conjugem suavissime, verum ut id tum facias cum in thoro suavissimis amplexibus et osculis Catharinam tenueris, ac sic cogitaveris: en hunc hominem, optimam creaturulam Dei mei, donavit mihi Christus meus, sit illi laus et gloria. Ego quoque cum divinavero diem qua has acceperis, ea nocte simili opere meam amabo in tui memoriam et tibi par pari referam. Salutat et te et costam tuam mea costa in Christo. Gratia vobiscum. Amen.*" Letter of December 6, 1525. An esteemed Protestant historian of Luther declared recently in the "Theol. Studien und Kritiken" that he was charmed with Luther's "wholesome and natural spirit, combined with such hearty piety." The explanation is that this historian disagrees with the "shy reticence" now observed in these matters as at variance with the "higher moral sense," and looks on what "Thomas says of the *actus matrimonialis*" as an "entire perversion of the sound ethics of matrimony." Another historian "thanks Luther warmly for this letter," whilst a third scholar extols "the depth of feeling with which Luther, as a married man, comprehends the mystery of neighbourly love within marriage."

with the object of banishing the melancholy of a weak flesh, not with any evil intent."[1] At such moments he appears to have remembered how startling a contrast his speeches and jests presented to the exhortation of St. Paul to his disciples, and to all the preachers of the Gospel: "Make thyself a pattern to all men . . . by a worthy mode of life; let thy conversation be pure and blameless" (Titus ii. 7 f.). "Be a model to the faithful in word, in act, in faith and charity, in chastity" (1 Tim. iv. 12).

It would be wrong to believe that he ever formally declared foul speaking to be permissible. It has been said that, in any case in theory, he had no objection to it, and, that, in a letter, he even recommends it. The passage in question, found in an epistle addressed to Prince Joachim of Anhalt, who was much troubled with temptations to melancholy, runs thus: "It is true that to take pleasure in sin is the devil, but to take pleasure in the society of good, pious people in the fear of God, sobriety and honour is well pleasing to God, even with possibly a word or 'Zötlein' too much."[2] The expression "Zötlein" (allied with the French "sottise") did not, however, then bear the bad meaning suggested by the modern German word "Zote," and means no more than a jest or merry story; that such a meaning was conveyed even by the word "Zote" itself can readily be proved.

Especially was it Luther's practice to load his polemics with a superabundance of filthy allusions to the baser functions of the body; at times, too, we meet therein expressions and imagery positively indecent.

In his work "Vom Schem Hamphoras" against the Jews he revels in scenes recalling that enacted between Putiphar's wife and Joseph, though here it is no mere temptation but actual mutual sin; the tract contains much else of the same character.[3] In the notorious tract entitled "Wider Hans Worst," which he wrote against Duke Henry of Brunswick (1541), he begins by comparing him with a "common procuress walking the street to seize, capture and lead astray honest maidens";[4] he gradually works himself up into such a state of excitement as to describe the Church of Rome as the "real devil's whore"; nay, the "archdevil's whore," the "shameless prostitute" who dwells

[1] More on this, vol. v., xxxii. 4 f.

[2] Letter of May 23, 1534, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 48; "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 55.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, pp. 340 f., 342 ff., 346 f. [4] *Ibid.*, 26, p. 6.

in a "whores' church" and houses of ill-fame, and compared with whom, as we have already heard him say elsewhere, "common city whores, field whores, country whores and army whores"[1] may well be deemed saints. In this work such figures of speech occur on almost every page. Elsewhere he describes the motions of the "Roman whore" in the most repulsive imagery.[2]

The term "whore" is one of which he is ever making use, more particularly in that connection in which he feels it will be most shocking to Catholics, viz. in connection with professed religious. Nor does he hesitate to use this word to describe human reason as against faith. In such varied and frenzied combinations is the term met with in his writings that one stands aghast. As he remarked on one occasion to his pupil Schlaginhaufen, people would come at last to look upon him as a pimp. He had been asked to act as intermediary in arranging a marriage: "Write this down," he said, "Is it not a nuisance? Am I expected to provide also the women with husbands? Really they seem to take me for a pander."[3]

Even holy things were not safe in Luther's hands, but ran the risk of being vilified by outrageous comparisons and made the subject of improper conversations.

According to Lauterbach's Diary, for instance, Luther discoursed in 1538 on the greatness of God and the wisdom manifest in creation; in this connection he holds forth before the assembled company on the details of generation and the shape of the female body. He then passes on to the subject of regeneration: "We think we can instruct God '*in regenerationis et salvationis articulo*,' we like to dispute at great length on infant baptism and the occult virtue of the sacraments, and, all the while, poor fools that we are, we do not know '*unde sint stercora in ventre*.'"[4] Over the beer-can the conversation turns on temperance, and Luther thereupon proposes for discussion an idea of Plato's on procreation;[5] again he submits an ostensibly difficult "*casus*" regarding the girl who becomes a mother on the frontier of two countries;[6] he relates the tale of the woman who "*habitu viri et membro ficto*" "*duas uxores duxit*";[7] he dilates on a "marvellous" peculiarity of the female body, which one would have thought of a nature to interest a physician rather than a theologian.[8] He also treats of the Bible passage according to which woman must be veiled "on account of the angels" (1 Cor. xi. 11), adding with his customary vulgarity: "And I too must wear breeches on account of the girls."[9] When the conversation

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 26, pp. 23–26.
[2] *Ibid.*, 63, p. 394 ("Tischreden").
[3] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 82
[4] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 87 (Khummer).
[5] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 73.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 1. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 2. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[9] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 426.

turned on the marriage of a young fellow to a lady of a certain age he remarked, that at such nuptials the words "Increase and multiply" ought not to be used; as the poet says: "*Arvinam quaerunt multi in podice porci*," surely a useless search.[1] The reason "why God was so angry with the Pope" was, he elsewhere informs his guests, because he had robbed Him of the fruit of the body. "We should have received no blessing unless God had implanted our passions in us. But to the spark present in both man and wife the children owe their being; even though our children are born ugly we love them nevertheless."[2]—He then raises his thoughts to God and exclaims: "Ah, beloved Lord God, would that all had remained according to Thine order and creation." But what the Pope had achieved by his errors was well known: "We are aware how things have gone hitherto." "The Pope wanted to enforce celibacy and to improve God's work." But the monks and Papists ". . . are consumed with concupiscence and the lust of fornication."[3]—Take counsel with someone beforehand, he says, "in order that you may not repent after the marriage. But be careful that you are not misled by advice and sophistry, else you may find yourself with a sad handful . . . then He Who drives the wheel, i.e. God, will jeer at you. But that you should wish to possess one who is pretty, pious and wealthy, nay, my friend . . . it will fare with you as it did with the nuns who were given carved Jesus's and who cast about for others who at least were living and pleased them better."[4]

Thus does Luther jumble together unseemly fancies, coarse concessions to sensuality and praise for broken vows, with thoughts of the Divine.

Anyone who regards celibacy and monastic vows from the Catholic standpoint may well ask how a man intent on throwing mud at the religious state, a man who had broken his most sacred pledges by his marriage with a nun, could be in a position rightly to appreciate the delicate blossoms which in every age have sprung up on the chaste soil of Christian continence in the lives of countless priests and religious, not in the cloister alone, but also in the world without?

Of his achievements in this field, of his having trodden celibacy under foot, Luther was very proud. To the success

[1] See above, p. 228, n. 6. It is strange to note that Mathesius commences the paragraph in question thus: "As occasion arose all sorts of wise sayings fell from his lips. The man was full of grace and the Holy Ghost, for which reason all who sought counsel from him as from God's own prophet found what they needed. One of them once asked whether it would be a real marriage were a young fellow," etc.

[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 99.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 204.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

of his unholy efforts he himself gave testimony in the words already mentioned: "I am like unto Abraham [the Father of the Faithful] for I am the progenitor of all the monks, priests and nuns [who have married], and of all the many children they have brought into the world; I am the father of a great people."[1]

By his attacks on celibacy and the unseemliness of his language Luther, nevertheless, caused many to turn away from him in disgust. Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick, who reverted to Catholicism in 1710, states in a writing on the step he had taken, that it was due to some extent to his disgust at Luther's vulgarity. "What writer," he says, "has left works containing more filth? . . . Such was his way of writing that his followers at the present day are ashamed of it." He had compared the character of this reformer of the Church, so he tells us, with that of the apostolic men of ancient times. In striking contrast they were "pious, God-fearing men, of great virtue, temperate, humble, abstemious, despising worldly possessions, not given to luxury, having only the salvation of souls before their eyes"; particularly did they differ from Luther in the matter of purity and chastity.[2]

### 6. Contemporary Complaints. Later False Reports

Those of his contemporaries who speak unfavourably of Luther's private life belong to the ranks of his opponents. His own followers either were acquainted only with what was to his advantage, or else took care not to commit themselves to any public disapproval. To give blind credence in every case to the testimony of his enemies would, of course, be opposed to the very rudiments of criticism, but equally alien to truth and justice would it be to reject it unheard. In each separate case it must depend on the character of the witness and on his opportunity for obtaining reliable information and forming a just opinion, how much we credit his statements.

Concerning the witnesses first to be heard, we must bear in mind, that, hostile as they were to Luther, they had the

[1] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 426.

[2] "Cinquante raisons," etc., Munick, 1736, consid. 25, p. 32 s. I have access only to the French edition of this work, published originally in German and Latin.

opportunity of seeing him at close quarters. How far their statements are unworthy of credence (for that they are not to be taken exactly at their word is clear enough) cannot be determined here in detail. The mere fact, however, that, at Wittenberg and in Saxony, some should have written so strongly against Luther would of itself lead us to pay attention to their words. In the case of the other witnesses we shall be able to draw some sort of general inference from their personal circumstances as to the degree of credibility to be accorded them. While writers within Luther's camp were launching out into fulsome panegyrics of their leader, it is of interest to listen to what the other side had to say, even though, there too, the speakers should allow themselves to be carried away to statements manifestly exaggerated.

Simon Lemnius, the Humanist, who, owing to his satirical epigrams on the Wittenberg professor—whom he had known personally—was inexorably persecuted by the latter, wrote, in his "Apology," about 1539, the following description of Luther's life and career. This and the whole "Apology," was suppressed by the party attacked; the later extracts from this writing, published by Schelhorn (1737) and Hausen (1776), passed over it in silence, till it was at last again brought to light in 1892: "While Luther boasts of being an evangelical bishop, how comes it that he lives far from temperately? For he is in the habit of overloading himself with food and drink; he has his court of flatterers and adulators; he has his Venus [Bora] and wants scarcely anything which could minister to his comfort and luxury."[1] "He has written a pamphlet against me, in which, as both judge and authority, he condemns and mishandles me. Surely no pastor would arrogate to himself such authority in temporal concerns. He deprives the bishops of their temporal power, but himself is a tyrant; he circulates opprobrious and quite execrable writings against illustrious Princes. He flatters one Prince and libels another. What is this but to preach revolt and to pave the way for a general upheaval and the downfall of our States? . . . It is greatly to be feared, that, should war once break out, first Germany will succumb miserably and then the whole Roman Empire go to ruin. Meanwhile Luther sits like a dictator at Wittenberg and rules; what he says must be taken as law."[2]

[1] "S.B. Böhm. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften," 1892, p. 123. In this volume Constantine Höfler has reprinted the lost "Apology" with a preface, p. 79 ff. Cp. E. Michael, "Luther und Lemnius, wittenbergische Inquisition, 1538," in "Zeitschr. für kath. Theol.," 19, 1895, p. 450 ff., where the passage in question is given in Latin.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 136. Michael, *ibid.*, p. 465.

By the Anabaptists Luther's and his followers' "weak life" was severely criticised about 1525. Here we refer only cursorily to the statements already quoted,[1] in order to point out that these opponents based their theological strictures on a general, and, in itself, incontrovertible argument: "Where Christian faith does not issue in works, there the faith is neither rightly preached nor rightly accepted."[2] In Luther they were unable to discern a "spark of Christianity," though his "passionate and rude temper" was evident enough.[3] "The witless, self-indulgent lump of flesh at Wittenberg," Dr. Luther, was not only the "excessively ambitious Dr. Liar, but also a proud fool,"[4] whose "defiant teaching and selfish ways" were far removed from what Christ and His Apostles had enjoined. In spite of the manifest spiritual desolation of the people Luther was wont to sit "with the beer-swillers" and to eat "sumptuous repasts"; he had even tolerated "open harlotry" on the part of some of the members of the University although, as a rule, he "manfully opposed" this vice.[5]

Catholic censors were even stronger in their expression of indignation. Dungersheim of Leipzig, in spite of his polemics an otherwise reliable witness, though rather inclined to rhetoric, in the fourth decade of the century reproached him in his "Thirty Articles" for leading a "life full of scandal"; he likewise appeals to some who had known him intimately, and was ready, if necessary, "to relate everything, down to the circumstances and the names."[6] As a matter of fact, however, this theologian never defined his charges.

From the Duchy of Saxony, too, came the indignant voice of bluff Duke George, whom Luther had attacked and slandered in so outrageous a fashion: "Out upon you, you forsworn and sacrilegious fellow, Martin Luther (may God pardon me), public-house keeper for all renegade monks, nuns and apostates!"[7] He calls him "Luther, you drunken swine," you "most unintelligent bacchant and ten times dyed horned beast of whom Daniel spoke in chapter viii., etc."[8] Luther had called this Prince a "bloodhound"; he is paid back in his own coin: "You cursed, perjured bloodhound"; he was the "arch-murderer," body and soul, of the rebellious peasants, "the biggest murderer and bloodhound ever yet seen on the surface of the globe."[9] "You want us to believe that no one has written more beautifully of the Emperor and the Empire than yourself. If what you have written of his Imperial Majesty is beautiful, then my idea of beauty is all wrong; for it would be easy to find

[1] Vol. ii., pp. 129 f., 364, 368 f., 376.

[2] Ickelsamer, "Clag etlicher Brüder," ed. Enders, p. 48. See our vol. ii., p. 368 n.

[3] Enders, p. 52.

[4] Münzer, "Hochverursachte Schutzrede und Antwort," ed. Enders, p. 18 ff.

[5] See vol. ii., p. 130 f.

[6] Art. 17, p. 81.

[7] In answer to the screed, "Widder den Meuchler zu Dresen" 1531, reprinted in "Werke," Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 145.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 141.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 148 f.

tipsy peasants in plenty who can write nine times better than you."[1]

From the theologian Ambrosius Catharinus we hear some details concerning Luther's private life.

On the strength of hearsay reports, picked up, so it would appear, from some of the visitors to the Council of Trent in 1546 and 1547, this Italian, who was often over-ardent both in attack and defence, wrote in the latter year his work: "*De consideratione praesentium temporum libri quattuor.*" Here he says: "Quite reliable witnesses tell me of Luther, that he frequently honoured the wedding feasts of strangers by his presence, went to see the maidens dance and occasionally even led the round dance himself. They declare that he sometimes got up from the banquets so drunk and helpless that he staggered from side to side, and had to be carried home on his friends' shoulders."[2]

As an echo of the rumours current in Catholic circles we have already mentioned elsewhere the charges alleged in 1524 by Ferdinand the German King, and related by Luther himself, viz. that he "passed his time with light women and at playing pitch-and-toss in the taverns."[3] We have also recorded the vigorous denunciation of the Catholic Count, Hoyer of Mansfeld, which dates from a somewhat earlier period; this came from a man whose home was not far from Luther's, and to whose character no exception has been taken. Hoyer wrote that whereas formerly at Worms he had been a "good Lutheran," he had now "found that Luther was nothing but a knave," who, as the way was at Mansfeld, filled himself with drink, was fond of keeping company with pretty women, and led a loose life, for which reason he, the Count, had "fallen away altogether."[4] The latter statements refer to a period somewhere about 1522, i.e. previous to Luther's marriage. With regard to that critical juncture in the year 1525 some consideration must be given to what Bugenhagen says of Luther's marriage in his letter to Spalatin, which really voices the opinion of Luther's friends at Wittenberg: "Evil tales were the cause of Dr. Martin's becoming a married man so unexpectedly."[5] The hope then expressed

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 140.

[2] Venetiis, 1547. In 1548 Johann Cochlæus collected Catharinus's strictures on Luther out of three of the former's writings, and entitled his work "De persona et doctrina M. Lutheri judicium fratris A. Catharini," etc., Moguntiae, 1548. The above quotation appears in this collection, fol. C. 2a. For an account of the great services rendered by Catharinus, who for all his piety was yet too prejudiced and combative, see Joseph Schweizer, "Ambrosius Catharinus Politus," 1910 ("Reformationsgeschichtl. Studien und Texte," ed. J. Greving, Hft. 11 and 12). Cp. the remarks of others living at a distance given below, p. 294 ff., and the Roman reports mentioned by Jacob Ziegler (vol. ii., p. 133).

[3] Luther to Spalatin on January 14, 1524, "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 278. See our vol. ii., p. 133.

[4] See vol. ii., p. 132 f.

[5] Letter of June 16, 1525; "*Maligna fama effecit,*" etc. See vol. ii., p. 175.

by Melanchthon, that marriage would sober Luther and that he would lay aside his unseemliness,[1] was scarcely to be realised. Melanchthon, however, no longer complains of it, having at length grown resigned. Yet he continued to regret Luther's bitterness and irritability: "Oh, that Luther would only be silent! I had hoped that as he advanced in years his many difficulties and riper experience would make him more gentle; but I cannot help seeing that in reality he is growing even more violent than before. . . . Whenever I think of it I am plunged into deep distress."[2]

Leo Judæ, one of the leaders of the Swiss Reformation, and an opponent of Wittenberg, "accuses Luther of drunkenness and all manner of things; such a bishop [he says] he would not permit to rule over even the most insignificant see." Thus in a letter to Bucer on April 24, 1534, quoted by Theodore Kolde in his "Analecta Lutherana,"[3] who, unfortunately, does not give the actual text. According to Kolde, Leo Judæ continues: "Even the devil confesses Christ. I believe that since the time of the Apostles no one has ever spoken so disgracefully ('*turpiter*') as Luther, so ridiculously and irreligiously. Unless we resist him betimes, what else can we expect of the man but that he will become another Pope, who orders things first one way then another ('*fingit et refingit*'), consigns this one to Satan and that one to heaven, puts one man out of the Church and receives another into it again, until things come to such a pass that he acts as Judge over all whilst no one pays the least attention to him?" With the exception of rejecting infant baptism, so Kolde goes on, Luther appeared to Judæ no better than Schwenckfeld, with whom Bucer would have nought to do; Judæ proceeds: "Not for one hundred thousand crowns would I have all evangelical preachers to resemble Luther; no one could compare with him for his wealth of abuse and for his woman-like, impotent agitation; his clamour and readiness of tongue are nowhere to be equalled."[4]

Powerful indeed is the rhetorical outburst of Zwingli in a letter to Conrad Sam the preacher of Ulm, dated August 30, 1528: "May I be lost if he [Luther] does not surpass Faber in foolishness, Eck in impurity, Cochlæus in impudence, and to sum it up shortly, all the vicious in vice."[5]

Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, attacks Luther in his "Warhafften Bekanntnuss" of 1545 in reply to the latter's "Kurtz Bekentnis": "The booklet [Luther's] is so crammed with devils, unchristian abuse, immoral, wicked, and unclean words, anger, rage and fury that all who read it without being as mad as the author must be greatly surprised and astonished,

[1] See vol. ii., p. 176, n. 3.
[2] Letter to Camerarius, April 11, 1526. "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 794.
[3] Page. 205; "aus dem Thesaurus Baum in Strassburg."
[4] Kolde, *ibid.*, p. 229.
[5] Quoted by R. Stähelin, "Huldreich Zwingli," 2, Basle, 1897, p. 311, and "Briefe aus der Reformationszeit," Basle, 1887, p. 21: "*si non stultitia Fabrum superat, impuritate Eccium, audacia Cocleum, et quid multa, omnia omnium vitia*," etc.

that so old, gifted, experienced and reputable a man cannot keep within bounds but must break out into such rudeness and filth as to ruin his cause in the eyes of all right-thinking men."[1]

Johann Agricola, at one time Luther's confidant and well acquainted with all the circumstances of his life, but later his opponent on the question of Antinomianism, left behind him such abuse of Luther that, as E. Thiele says, "it is difficult to believe such language proceeds, not from one of Luther's Roman adversaries, but from a man who boasts of having possessed his special confidence." He almost goes so far, according to Thiele, as to portray him as a "drunken profligate"; he says, "the pious man," the "man of God ('*vir Dei*')," allowed himself to be led astray by the "men of Belial," i.e. by false friends, and was inclined to be suspicious; he bitterly laments the scolding and cursing of which his works were full. One of his writings, "Against the Antinomians" (1539), was, he says, "full of lies"; in it Luther had accused him in the strongest terms and before the whole world of being a liar; it was "an abominable lie" when Luther attributed to him the statement, that God was not to be invoked and that there was no need of performing good works. When Luther's tract was read from the pulpit even the Wittenbergers boggled at these lies and said: "Now we see what a monk is capable of thinking and doing." Agricola also describes Luther's immediate hearers and pupils at Wittenberg as mere "Sodomites," and the town as the "Sister of Sodom."[2] Such is the opinion of this restless, passionate man, who bitterly resented the wrong done him by Luther. (See vol. v., xxix. 3.)

Not all the above accusations are entirely baseless, for some are confirmed by other proofs quite above suspicion. The charge of habitual drunkenness, as will be shown below (xvii. 7), must be allowed to drop; so likewise must that of having been a glutton and of having constantly pandered to sensual passion; that Luther sanctioned immorality among his friends and neighbours can scarcely be squared with his frequent protests against the disorders rife at the University of Wittenberg; finally, we have to reduce to their proper proportions certain, in themselves justifiable, subjects of complaint. That, however, everything alleged against him was a pure invention of his foes, only those can believe whom prejudice blinds to everything which might tell against their hero.

The charges of the Swiss theologians, though so strongly expressed, refer in the main to Luther's want of restraint

[1] Fol. 3, 9. Quoted by N. Paulus in the "Hist. Jahrb.," 26, 1905, p. 852.

[2] "Theol. Studien und Kritiken," 1907, p. 246 ff. (Excerpts given by the Protestant scholar E. Thiele, from a Bible at Wernigerode.)

in speech and writing; the vigour of their defensive tactics it is easy enough to understand, and, at any rate, Luther's writings are available for reference and allow us to appreciate how far their charges were justified.

Another necessary preliminary remark is that no detailed accusation was ever brought against Luther of having had relations with any woman other than his wife; nothing of this nature appears to have reached the ears of the writers in question. Due weight must here be given to Luther's constant anxiety not to compromise the Evangel by any personal misconduct. (See vol. ii., p. 133.) Luther, naturally enough, was ever in a state of apprehension as to what his opponents might, rightly or wrongly, impute to him. That he was liable to be misrepresented, particularly by foreigners (Aleander [vol. ii., p. 78] and Catharinus), is plain from the examples given above. The distance at which Catharinus resided from Wittenberg led him to lend a willing ear to the reports brought by "reliable men," needless to say opponents of Luther.

The deep dislike felt by faithful Catholics for the Wittenberg professor and their lively abhorrence for certain moral doctrines expressed by him in extravagant language,[1] formed a fertile soil for the growth of legends; some of these, met with amongst the literary defenders of Catholicism after Luther's death, have been propagated even in modern times, and accordingly call for careful examination at the hands of the Catholic critic. Where Luther himself speaks we are on safe ground, as the method employed above shows. Where, however, we have to listen to strangers doubt must needs arise, and the task of discriminating becomes inevitable, owing to the speaker's probable prejudice either for or against Luther. This applies, as we have already seen, even to Luther's contemporaries, but it holds good even more as we approach modern times, when, in the heat of controversy, things were said concerning alleged historical facts, for instance, Luther's immorality, which were certainly quite unknown to his own contemporaries. Many of Luther's accusers had never read his works, possibly had not even troubled to look up a single one of the facts or passages

[1] We have only to recall the exaggerations concerning the power of faith alone, even in the case of the filthiest sins, e.g. "Werke," Weim. ed., 8, p. 527 f.; Erl. ed., 28, p. 92. Cp. above, pp. 177, 180 ff., 185 ff., 196, etc.

cited. We must, however, remember—a fact which serves to some extent to explain the regrettable lack of exactitude and discernment—that the prohibition of reading Luther's writings was on the whole strictly enforced by the authorities of the Church and conscientiously obeyed by the faithful, even by writers. Only rarely in olden days[1] were dispensations granted. Thus, when attacking Luther, writers were wont to utilise passages quoted by earlier writers, often truncated excerpts given without the context. Misunderstood or entirely incorrect accounts of events connected with his life were accepted as facts, of which now, thanks to his works and particularly to his letters, we are in a better position to judge. Many seemed unaware that the misunderstandings were growing from age to age, the reason being that instead of taking as authorities the best and oldest Luther controversialists, those of a later date were preferred in whose writings facts and quotations had already undergone embellishment. In this wise the older popular literature came to attribute to Luther the strangest statements and to make complaints for which no foundation existed in fact. Incautious interpretation by more recent writers, whose training scarcely fitted them for the task and who might have learnt better by consulting Luther's works and letters, has led to a still greater increase of the evil.

In the following pages we propose to examine rather more narrowly certain statements which appear in the older and also more recent controversial works.

*Had Luther three children of his own apart from those born of his union with Bora?*

By his wife Luther was father to five children, viz. Hans (1526), Magdalene (1529), Martin (1531), Paul (1533) and Margaret (1534).

The paternity of another child born of a certain Rosina Truchsess, a servant in his house, has also been ascribed to him, it being alleged that his references to this girl are very compromising.[2] The latter assertion, however, does not hold good,

[1] "The reading of heretical books was made difficult even for the Jesuits." B. Duhr, "Gesch. der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge," 1, 1907, p. 657. The learned polemical writers of the Society did, however, make use of the writings of heretics, Luther's inclusive, as is clear from their works.

[2] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, pp. 395, 506, 625, 753.

if only we read the passages in an unprejudiced spirit; at most they prove that Luther allowed his kindliness to get the better of his caution in receiving into his house one who subsequently proved herself to be both untruthful and immoral, and that, when by her misconduct she had compromised her master and his family, he was exceedingly angry with her. It is incorrect to say that Rosina ever designated Luther as the father of her baby.

The second child was one named Andreas, of whom Luther is said to have spoken as his son. This boy, however, has been proved to have been his nephew, Andreas Kaufmann, who was brought up in Luther's family. Only through a mistake of the editor is he spoken of in the Table-Talk as "My Enders" and "My son"; later a fresh alteration of the text resulted in: "*filius meus Andreas.*"[1]

The third child was said to have been referred to in the Table-Talk as an "*adulter infans,*" in a passage where mention is made of its having been suckled by Catherine during pregnancy. In Aurifaber's Table-Talk (1569 edition) "*adulterum infantem*" is, however, a misprint for "*alterum infantem,*" which is the true reading as it appears in the first (1568) edition. It is true that the passage in question mentions of two of Luther's own children, that his wife was already with child before the first had been weaned.[2]

### *Luther and Catherine Bora.*

A letter which Luther wrote to his wife from Eisleben shortly before the end of his life, when he was staying at the Court of the Count of Mansfeld, has been taken as an admission of immorality: "I am now, thanks be to God, in a good case were it not for the pretty women who press me so hard that I again go in fear and peril of unchastity."[3] What exactly means this reference to unchastity? As a matter of fact, after having partially recovered from his malady, he is here seeking to allay his wife's anxiety by adopting a jesting tone, though perhaps exception might be taken to the nature of his jest. That what he says was intended as a joke is plain also from the superscription of the letter, addressed to the "Pork dealer," an allusion to her purchase of a garden close to the Wittenberg pig-market. In the letter he explains humorously to his anxious wife (this too has been taken seriously), that his catarrh and giddiness had been wholly caused by the Jews, viz. by a cold wind raised up against him by them or their God (he was just then engaged in a controversy with the Jews).—The superscriptions of the various letters to Catherine and the jesting remarks they contain have also been taken far too tragically. Luther was wont to address

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 141, n., and p. v. Andreas matriculated at the University of Wittenberg in 1538.

[2] Cp. also Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 112; Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 430.

[3] On February 1, 1546, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 783.

her as deeply-learned dame, gracious lady, holy and careful lady, most holy Katey, Doctoress, etc., also as My Lord Katey and Gracious Lord Katey. It may be that the latter appellations refer to a certain haughtiness peculiar to her; but it would be to misunderstand him entirely to see in this or even in the name "Kette"=chain, which he applies to her now and then, an involuntary admission that he was bound by the fetters of a self-willed wife. We have seen how he once spoke of her in a letter previous to his marriage as his "mistress" (Metze), which has led careless controversialists to fancy that Luther quite openly had admitted that she was "his concubine" (vol. ii., p. 183). At any rate, not only was Luther's language unseemly in many of his letters and in his intercourse with his Wittenberg circle, but this license of speech seems even to have infected the ladies of the party, at least if we may credit Simon Lemnius who, on the strength of what he had seen at Wittenberg, says that the wives of Luther, Justus Jonas and Spalatin vied with each other in indecent stories and confidences.[1] Thus we cannot take it amiss if the Catholics of that day, to whose ears came such rumours—doubtless already magnified—were too ready to credit them and to give open expression to their surmises. An instance of this is what Master Joachim von der Heyden wrote, in 1528, to Catherine Bora, viz. that she had lived with Luther before their marriage in shameful and open lewdness—*as was said.*[2]

### *Did Luther indulge in "the Worst Orgies" with the Escaped Nuns in the Black Monastery of Wittenberg?*

To give an affirmative reply to this would call for very strong proofs, which, in point of fact, are not forthcoming. The passage in the Latin Table-Talk[3] quoted in justification contains nothing of the sort, but, strange to say, a very fine exhortation to continence. For this reason we must again consider it, though it has already been dealt with. The exhortation commences with the words: "God is Almighty, Eternal, Merciful, Longsuffering, Chaste, etc. He loves chastity, purity, modesty. He aids and preserves it by the sacred institution of marriage in order that [as Paul says] each one may possess his vessel in sanctification, free from unbridled lust. He punishes rape, adultery, fornication, incest and secret sins with infamy and terrible bodily consequences. He warns such sinners that they shall have no part in the Kingdom of God. Therefore let us be watchful in prayer," etc. It is true, however, that this pious exhortation is set off by frivolous remarks, and it is probably one of these which suggested the erroneous reference. Luther here speaks of his young "relative," Magdalene Kaufmann—a girl of marriageable age living in his house—and of two other maidens of the

[1] Sim. Lemnius, "Monachopornomachia," a satire against Luther. Cp. Strobel, "Neue Beiträge zur Literatur," 3, 1, p. 137 ff.

[2] In Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 6, p. 334.

[3] "Colloq.," ed. Rebenstock, Francof., 1571, 2, fol. 95.

same age, remarking that formerly people had been ready for marriage at an earlier age than now, but that he was ready to vouch for the fitness of these three wenches for conjugal work, even to staking his wife on it, etc. Of any "wicked orgies" we hear nothing whatever. Further, it is inexact to state, as has been done, that Luther was surrounded in "his dwelling" by nuns whom he had given a lodging. Neither before nor after his marriage did they stay with him permanently; as already stated (vol. ii., p. 138) he either handed over the escaped nuns to their friends or lodged them in families at Wittenberg. Only on one occasion, in September, 1525, when in the hurry it was impossible to find accommodation for a new band of fugitives, did he receive them temporarily, possibly only for a few days, in the great "Black Monastery."[1] There, as he himself then expressed it, he was "*privatus pater familias.*"

### *The Passages "which will not bear repetition."*

The popular writer who is responsible for the tale of the "orgies" also declares, there are "other admissions of Luther's" "which will not bear repetition." No such admissions exist. The phrase that this or that will not bear repetition is, however, a favourite one among controversialists of a certain school, though very misleading; many, no doubt, will have been quite disappointed on looking up the passages in question in Luther's writings to find in them nothing nearly so bad as they had been led to expect; this, indeed, was one of the reasons which impelled us rigidly to exclude from the present work any reservation and to give in full even the most revolting passages. Of one of Luther's Theses against the theologians of Louvain we read, for instance, in a controversial pamphlet which is not usually particular about the propriety of its quotations, that the author does "not dare reproduce it"; yet, albeit coarsely worded, the passage in question really contains nothing so very dreadful, and, as for its coarseness, it is merely such as every reader of Luther's works is prepared to encounter. The passage thus incriminated, which reads comically enough in its scholastic presentation (Thesis 31), runs as follows: "*Deinde nihil ex scripturis, sed omnia ex doctrinis hominum ructant* [*Lovanienses*], *vomunt et cacant in ecclesiam, non suam sed Dei viventis.*"[2] The German translation in the original edition of 1545 slightly aggravates the wording of the Thesis.[3]

[1] They were received on September 29, 1525. "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 248.

[2] "Opp. Lat. var.," 4, 486.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 65, p. 170. It has been asserted by controversialists that another version of the German translation of these Theses had already been made in 1545 from which some of the most "swinish expressions" were omitted through motives of modesty. Of any such revision during Luther's lifetime nothing is, however, known. Probably the reference is to Caspar Cruciger's translation which is placed next to the older translation in Walch's edition of

Two other assertions to Luther's disadvantage have something in common; one represents as the starting-point of the whole movement which he inaugurated his desire to "wed a girl"; the other makes him declare, three years before the end of his life and as the sum-total of his experience, that the lot of the hog is the most enviable goal of happiness.[1] A third statement goes back to his early youth and seeks to find the explanation of his later faults in a temptation succumbed to when he was little more than a boy. The facts, alleged to belong to his early history, may be taken in connection with kindred matters and examined more carefully than was possible when relating the details of his early development. After that we shall deal with the story of the "hog."

*Did Luther, as a Young Monk, say that he would push on until he could wed a Girl?*

Such is the story, taken from a Catholic sermon preached in 1580 by Wolfgang Agricola and long exploited in popular anti-Lutheran writings as a proof that Luther really made such a statement. A "document," an "ancient deed," nay, even a confidential "letter to his friend Spalatin," containing the statement have also been hinted at; all this, however, is non-existent; all that we have is the story in the sermon.

The sermon, which is to be found in an old Ingolstadt print,[2] contains all sorts of interesting religious memories of Spalatin, the influential friend of Luther's youthful days. The preacher was Dean in the little town of Spalt, near Nuremberg, Spalatin's birthplace, from which the latter was known by the name of Spalatinus, his real name being Burkard. The recollections are by no means all of them equally vouched for, and hence we must go into them carefully in order rightly to appreciate the

Luther's works (19, p. 2258). But examination proves that Cruciger by no means weakened the wording, indeed, his rendering is in some instances even stronger, for instance, that of Theses 35, 42, 61, and 64. The "Swine-theologians of Louvain," alluded to in his title, do not appear here in the original German edition.

[1] The latter statement was in great part withdrawn by one controversial writer of standing, but not before it had been made their own by the lesser fry.

[2] "Ein christenliche Predig von dem heyligen Ehestandt durch Wolfgangum Agricolam Spalatinum," Ingolstadt, 1580 (Münchener Staatsbibliothek, Hom. 53, 8°). Cp. the "Eichstätter Pastoralblatt," 1880, No. 27 ff., where accounts taken from a Spalt Chronicle of Wolfgang Agricola's, according to an Eichstätt MS. (n. 248), are given, and where is printed the passage referring to Luther in the sermon to be discussed later. In the Suttner index of Eichstätt books the sermon is numbered 258, which explains certain mistaken references to the "ancient deed."

value of each. We shall see that those dealing with Luther's love-adventures are the least to be trusted.

Agricola first gives some particulars concerning Spalatin's past, which seem founded on reliable tradition; in this his object is to confirm Catholics in their fidelity to the Church. Spalatin, in the course of a journey, came to his birthplace and, with forty-six gulden, founded a yearly Mass for his parents, the anniversary having been kept ever since, "even to the present day." It is evident that this was vouched for by written documents. To say, as some Protestants have, that this and what follows is the merest invention, is not justified. Agricola goes on to inform us that Spalatin settled the finances of the family, and that, on this occasion, he presented to the township of Spalt a picture of Our Lady, which had once belonged to the Schlosskirche of Wittenberg, requesting, however, that, out of consideration for Luther, the fact of his being the donor should be kept secret until after his death. Agricola also tells how, during his stay, Spalatin invited the "then Dean, Thomas Ludel," with the members of the chapter to be his guests, and in turn accepted their hospitality; he also attended the Catholic sermons in order to ascertain how the Word of God was preached. Thomas Ludel, the Dean, found opportunity quite frankly to discuss Spalatin's religious attitude, whereupon the latter said: "Stick to your own form of Divine Service," nor did Spalatin shrink from giving the same advice to the people. Every year, says Agricola, the picture of Our Lady which he had presented was placed on the High Altar to remind the faithful of the exhortation of their fellow-citizen.[1] The picture in question is still to be seen to-day at Spalt.[2] The narrator goes so far as to declare, that during the Dean's observations on his religious conduct "the tears came to Spalatin's eyes"; "I admit," he said, "that we carried things too far. . . . God be merciful to us all!" From Luther's correspondence we know that Spalatin, in later days, was much disquieted by melancholy and temptations to despair. Luther, by his letters, sought to inspire his friend as he approached the close of his life with confidence in Christ, agreeably with the tenets of the new Evangel.[3]

Almost all that Agricola here relates appears, from its local colouring, to be absolutely reliable, but this is by no means the case with what is of more interest to us, viz. the account of Luther as prospective bridegroom which he appends to his stories of Spalatin. The difference between this account and what has gone before cannot fail to strike one.

[1] In the sermon quoted, p. 95.

[2] See the "Eichstätter Pastoralblatt," *ibid.* "Spalatins Muttergottesbild."

[3] To Spalatin, August 21, 1544, Letters, ed. De Wette, 5, p. 679 ff. See above, p. 197, n. 1. In the last years of his life Spalatin fell into incurable melancholy which finally brought him to the grave (January 16, 1546). Cp. J. Wagner, "Georg Spalatin," Altenburg, 1830, p. 105 f. Luther was unacquainted with the actual cause of his fears, but says that some persons thought they were due to remorse for having given his sanction to an illegal marriage.

According to this story of Agricola's, set in a period some three-quarters of a century earlier, Luther, as a young Augustinian, at Erfurt struck up a friendship with Spalatin who was still studying there. At the University were two other youths from Spalt, George Ferber, who subsequently became Doctor, parish-priest and Dean of Spalt, and Hans Schlahinhauffen. All four became fast friends, and Luther was a frequent visitor at the house where they lived with a widow who had a pretty daughter. He became greatly enamoured of the girl and "taught her lace-making," until the mother forbade him the house. He often declared: "Oh, Spalatin, Spalatin, you cannot believe how devoted I am to this pretty maid; I will not die before I have brought things to such a pass that I also shall be able to marry a nice girl." Eventually, with the assistance of Spalatin, Luther, so we are told, introduced his innovations, partly in order to make himself famous, partly in order to be able to marry a girl.[1]

It is hardly probable that Wolfgang Agricola himself invented this story of the monk; more likely he found it amongst the numerous tales concerning Spalatin current at Spalt. His authority for the tale he does not give. It can scarcely have emanated from Spalatin himself—for instance, have been told by him on the occasion of the visit mentioned above—for then Agricola would surely have said so. It more probably belongs to that category of obscure myths clustering round the early days of Luther's struggle with the Church.

What is, however, of greater importance is that the monk's behaviour, as here described, does not tally with the facts known. During his first stay at the Erfurt monastery Luther was not by any means the worldly young man here depicted, and even during his second sojourn there (autumn, 1508—autumn, 1510) no one remarked any such tendency in him; on the contrary, the seven Observantine priories chose him as their representative at Rome, presumably because he was a man in whom they could trust. We may call to mind that the then Cathedral Provost of Magdeburg, Prince Adolf of Anhalt, received letters from him at this time attesting his zeal for the "spiritual life and doctrine,"[2] and that Luther's opponent, Cochlæus, from information received from Luther's brethren, gives him credit for the careful observance of the Rule in the matter of spiritual exercises and studies during his first years as a monk.[3] The notable change in Luther's outward mode of life took place only after his return from Rome when he abandoned the cause of the Observantine party.

Spalatin commenced his studies at Erfurt in 1498 and continued them from 1502 at Wittenberg; thence, on their termination, he returned to Erfurt in order to take up the position of

[1] Agricola's Sermon, p. 90.

[2] Cp. N. Paulus, "Hist. Jahrb.," 1903, p. 73, where Dungersheim is quoted: "As I have heard more than once from the lips of the said Lord Adolphus."

[3] "Acta et scripta Lutheri," p. 1.

tutor at a mansion, which he soon quitted to become (1505–1508) spiritual preceptor in the neighbouring convent of Georgenthal. Thus the date of his first stay at Erfurt was too early for him, while himself a student, to have met Luther as a monk, seeing that the latter only entered the monastery in 1505. His second stay presents this further difficulty, that it is not likely that Spalatin lived with the other students at the widow's house, but, first in a wealthy family, and, later, either in or near the convent. Further, were the other two youths hailing from Spalt then at Erfurt? A certain Johannes Schlaginhaufen from Spalt was there in 1518 and is also mentioned as being at the University in 1520. He is, perhaps, the same as the compiler of the Table-Talk edited by Wilhelm Preger,[1] but, if so, he was not a fellow-student of Luther's at Erfurt. No other similar name appears in the register. The name of the second, George Ferber, cannot be found at all in the Erfurt University register, nor any Farber, Färber or Tinctoris even with another Christian name. Thus there are difficulties on every side.

Then again, the familiar visits to the girl, as though there had been no Rule which debarred the young religious from such intercourse. We know that even in 1516 the Humanist Mutian had great trouble in obtaining permission for an Augustinian frequently to visit his house at Erfurt, even accompanied by another Friar.[2]

Hence, however deserving of credit Agricola's other accounts of Spalatin may be, we cannot accept his story of Luther's doings as a monk. Nor is this the only statement concerning the earlier history of the Reformation in which Agricola has gone astray. The story may have grown up at Spalt owing to some misunderstanding of something said by George Ferber, the Dean of Spalt, who was supposed to have been a fellow-student of Luther's at Erfurt, and who may possibly have related tales of the young Augustinian's early imprudence. It is however possible, in fact not at all unlikely, that, in 1501, when Luther was still a secular student at Erfurt, and according to the above, a contemporary of Spalatin's, he took a passing fancy to a girl in the house where Spalatin boarded, and that, during the controversies which accompanied the Reformation, a rumour of this was magnified into the tale that, as a monk, Luther had courted a girl, had been desirous of marrying, and, for this reason, had quitted both his Order and the Church.

[1] "Tischreden Luthers 1531–1532" (1888). Cp. the Introduction by the editor, p. vi. Preger does not appear to have heard of Wolfgang Agricola's "Hans Schlahinhauffen." Cp. the Erfurt register, in Weissenborn, "Akten der Erfurter Universität," 1–2; also the Index published in 1899. The particulars concerning Johannes Schlaginhaufen are contained in the second vol., pp. 301–316. Spalatin is there entered (p. 207) in 1498 as: "*Georgius Burchardi de Sula superiori.*"

[2] Mutian to Johann Lang, December 6, 1516, Kolde, "Analecta Lutherana," p. 5 f.

*Luther's stay as a boy in Cotta's house at Eisenach no ground for a charge of immorality.*

Entirely unfounded suspicions have been raised concerning Luther's residence in Frau Cotta's house at Eisenach (vol. i., p. 5). There is not the slightest justification for thinking that Frau Cotta—who has erroneously been described as a young widow—acted from base motives in thus receiving the youth, nor for the tale of his charming her by his playing on the lute or the flute.

Cuntz (Conrad) Cotta, the husband of Ursula Cotta (her maiden-name was Schalbe), was still living when Luther, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, was so kindly received into the house and thus dispensed from supplementing his small resources by singing in the streets. Conrad's name appears in 1505 in the Eisenach registers as one of the parish representatives. His wife Ursula, witness her tombstone, died in 1511.[1] How old she was at the time she became acquainted with Luther cannot be determined, but quite possibly, she, like her husband, was no longer young. The date of death of two supposed sons of hers would certainly tend to show that she was then still young, but these two Cottas, as has been proved, were not her sons, though they may have been nephews. Conrad Cotta is not known to have had any children, and the fact of his being childless would explain all the more readily Luther's reception into his household.

Mathesius, in his frequently quoted historical sermons on Luther,[2] says, that "a pious matron" admitted the poor scholar to her table. He is referring to Ursula Cotta. The word matron which he makes use of seems intended to denote rather respectability than advanced age. That he should mention only the wife is probably due to the fact that she, rather than her husband, was Luther's benefactress. He seems to have had the account from Luther himself, who, it would appear, told him the story together with the edifying cause of his reception. This Mathesius relates in a way which excludes rather than suggests any thought of dishonourable motives. He says that the matron conceived a "yearning attraction for the boy on account of his singing and his earnest prayer in the churches." The expression "yearning attraction," which sounds somewhat strange to us, was not unusual then and comes naturally to a preacher rather inclined to be sentimental, as was Mathesius. Ratzeberger the physician, a friend of Luther's to whom the latter may also have spoken of his stay at Eisenach, merely says, that the scholar "found board and lodging at Cuntz Cotta's." Thus he credits the husband with the act of charity.

Luther could not well have played the flute there, seeing that he never learned to play that instrument; as for the lute, he became proficient on it only during his academic years; nor does

[1] For all the proofs bearing on the matter see E. Schneidewind, "Das Lutherhaus in Eisenach," 1883.

[2] First ed., fol. 3.

any source allude to musical entertainments taking place in the Cotta household.

Luther relates later in the Table-Talk,[1] that he had learned this saying from his "hostess at Eisenach," i.e. Frau Cotta: "There is nought dearer on earth than the love of woman to the man who can win it." This, however, affords no ground for thinking evil. The saying was a popular one in general use and may quite naturally refer to the love existing between husband and wife. It is another question whether it was quite seemly on Luther's part to quote this saying as he did in his Glosses on the Bible, in connection with the fine description of the "*mulier fortis*" (Proverbs xxxi. 10 ff.), so distinguished for her virtue.

### *Did Luther describe the lot of the Hog as the most enviable Goal of Happiness?*

In view of the fear of death which he had often experienced when lying on the bed of sickness, Luther, so we are told, came to envy the lot of the hog, and to exclaim: "I am convinced that anyone who has felt the anguish and terror of death would rather be a pig than bear it for ever and ever." That such are his words is perfectly true, and he even goes on to give a graphic description of the happy and comfortable life a pig leads until it comes under the hand of the butcher, all due to its unacquaintance with death.[2]

It should first be noted that, throughout the work in question, "Von den Jüden und jren Lügen," Luther is busy with the Jews. He compares the happiness which, according to him, they await from their Messias, with that enjoyed by the pig.[3] In his cynical manner he concludes that the happiness of the pig was even to be preferred to Jewish happiness, for the Jews would not be "secure for a single hour" in the material happiness they expected, for they would be oppressed by the "horrible burden and plague of all men, viz. death," seeing that they merely look for a temporal king as their Messias, who shall procure them riches, mirth and pleasure. Thereupon we get one of his customary outbursts: "Were God to promise me no other Messias than him for whom the Jews hope, I would very much rather be a pig than a man."

Yet he proceeds: I, however, as a Christian, have a better Messias, "so that I have no reason to fear death, being assured of life everlasting," etc. Well might our "heart jump for joy and be intoxicated with mirth." "We give thanks to the Father of all Mercy. . . . It was in such joy as this that the Apostles sang and gave praise in prison amidst all their misery, and even young maidens, like Agatha and Lucy," etc. But the wretched Jews refused to acknowledge this Messias.

How then can one infer from Luther's words, "I am convinced that anyone who has felt the anguish and terror of death," etc., that he represented the lot of the hog as the supreme goal of

[1] Vol. iv., xxii. 5.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 261.
[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 260.

Christians in general and himself in particular ? It is true that he magnifies the fear of death which naturally must oppress the heart of every believer, and for the moment makes no account of the consolation of Christian hope, but all this is merely with the object of forcing home more strongly to the Jews whom he is addressing, what he had just said : " Of what use would all this be to me [viz. the earthly happiness which you look for] if I could not be sure of it even for one hour ? If the horrible burden and plague of all men, death, still presses on me, from which I am not secure for one instant, but go in fear of it, of hell and the wrath of God, and tremble and shiver at the prospect, and this without any hope of its coming to an end, but continuing for all eternity ? " His closing words apply to unbelievers who are ignorant of the salvation which is in Christ : " It is better to be a live pig than a man who is everlastingly dying." The passage therefore does not convey the meaning which has been read into it.

We may here glance at some charges in which his moral character is involved, brought against certain doctrines and sayings of Luther.

*Did Luther allow as valid Marriage between Brother and Sister ?*

The statement made by some Catholics that he did can be traced back to a misunderstanding of the simple word " dead." This word he wrote against several passages of a memorandum of Spalatin's on matrimonial questions submitted by the Elector in 1528, for instance, against one which ran : " Further, brother and sister may not marry, neither may a man take his brother's or sister's daughter or granddaughter. And similarly it is forbidden to marry one's father's, grandfather's, mother's or grandmother's sister."[1] The word " dead " here appended does not mean that the prohibition has ceased to hold, but is equivalent to " delete," and implies that the passage should be omitted in print. Luther considered it unnecessary or undesirable that the impediments in question should be mentioned in this " Instruction " ; he prefers that preachers should as a general rule simply insist on compliance with the Laws of the Empire.

The accompanying letter of the Elector, in which he requests Luther to read through the memorandum, anticipates such a recommendation to omit. In it the writer asks whether " it would perhaps be better to leave this out and to advise the pastors and preachers of this fact in the Visitation,"[2] since, in any case, the " Imperial Code," in which everything was contained in detail, was to be taken as the groundwork. Against many clauses of the Instruction Luther places the word " *placet* " ; a " *non placet* " occurs nowhere ; on the other hand, we find frequently " *omittatur*, dead, all this dead " (i.e. " delete ") ; he also says : " *hoc manebit, hactenus manebit textus* " (equivalent

[1] " Briefwechsel," ed. Enders, 6, p. 186.
[2] January 3, 1528, " Briefwechsel," 6, p. 180.

to "stet"). If "dead" had meant the same as "this impediment no longer holds," then Luther would here have removed the impediment even between father and daughter, mother and son, seeing that he writes "dead" also against the preceding clause, which runs: "Firstly, the marriage of persons related in the ascending and descending line is prohibited throughout and *in infinitum*."

### *Did Luther Recommend People to Pray for Many Wives and Few Children?*

This charge, too, belongs to the old armoury of well-worn weapons beloved of controversialists. The answer to the question may possibly afford material of some interest to the historian and man of letters.

Down to quite recent times it was not unusual to find in Catholic works a story of a poem, said to have been by Luther, found in a MS. Bible in the Vatican Library, in which Luther prayed that God in His Goodness would bestow "many wives and few children." At the present day no MS. Bible containing a poem by Luther, or any similar German verses, exists in the Vatican Library. What is meant, however, is a German translation of Holy Scripture, in five volumes, dating from the fifteenth century, which was formerly kept in the Vatican and now belongs to the Heidelberg University library. It is one of those Heidelberg MSS. which were brought to Rome in 1623 and again wandered back to their old quarters in 1816 (Palat. German. n. 19–23). The "poem" in question is at the end of vol. ii. (cod. 20). Of it, as given by Bartsch ("Die altdeutschen Handschriften der Universität Heidelberg") and Wilken ("Heidelberger Büchersammlung"),[1] we append a rough translation:

God Almighty, Thou art good,
Give us coat and mantle and hood,

* * * * *

Many a cow and many a ewe,
*Plenty of wives and children few.*

Explicit: A small wage
Makes the year to seem an age.

The "poem" has nothing whatever to do with Luther. It is a product of the Middle Ages, met with under various forms. The "Explicit," too, is older than Luther and presumably was added by the copyist of the volume. In the seventeenth century the opinion seems to have gained ground that Luther was the author, though no Roman scholar can be invoked as having said so. Of the MS. Montfaucon merely says: "A very old German Bible is worthy of notice"; Luther's name he does not mention.[2]

[1] Cp. W. Walther, "Deutsche Bibelübersetzungen," 1889 ff., p. 403 f.
[2] "Diarium italicum," 1708, p. 278.

One witness for the ascription of its authorship to Luther was Max. Misson, who, in his "Nouveau voyage d'Italie,"[1] gives the "poem" very inaccurately and states that a Bible was shown him at the Vatican in which Luther was said to have written it, and that the writing was the same as that of the rest of the volume. He adds, however, that it was hardly credible that Luther should have written such things in a Bible.

Later, Christian Juncker, a Protestant, relates the same thing in his "Life of Luther," published in 1699, but likewise expresses a doubt. He quotes the discourse on Travels in Italy by Johann Fabricius, the theologian of Helmstedt, where the version of the verses differs from that given by Misson.[2]

According to a record of a journey to Rome undertaken in 1693, given by Johann Friedrich von Wolfframsdorf, he, too, was shown a MS. Bible alleged to have been written by Luther, doubtless that mentioned above.[3]

As a matter of fact the "poem" in question was a popular mediæval one, frequently met with in manuscripts, sometimes in quite inoffensive forms. At any rate, the jingling rhymes (in the German original: Güte, Hüte, Rinder, Kinder) are the persistent feature. According to Bartsch it occurs in the Zimmern Chronik[4] in a version attributed to Count Hans Werdenberg (1268), which, while retaining the same rhymes (in the German), inverts the meaning. Here the prayer is for:

Potent stallions, portly oxen,
Buxom women, *plenty children.*

From a MS., "*Gesta Romanorum,*" of 1476, J. L. Hocker ("*Bibliotheca Heilbronnensis*"[5]), quotes a similar but shorter verse.[6] A different rendering of the poem was entered into a Diary in 1596 by Wolff von Stechau.[7]

Certain Protestant writers of the present day, not content with "saving Luther's honour" by emphasising the fact that the above verses of the Heidelberg MS. are not his, proceed to insinuate that they were really "aimed at the clergy"; the

[1] Tom. $2^4$, La Haye, 1702, p. 134.

[2] "Vita Lutheri, nummis illustrata," Francof. et Lipsiae, 1699, pp. 225, 227. Joh. Fabricius, "Amoenitates theologicae," Helmestadii, 1699, p. 676, in the Notes to his "Oratio de utilitate itineris Italiae." Fabricius says the verses, though usually attributed to Luther, were not in his handwriting, nor could Luther well have composed anything so clumsy. Further, the sub-librarian at Rome had assured him that in the Vatican there was only one quarto book written by Luther.

[3] Cp. Paul Haake, "Johann Fr. v. Wolfframsdorf" ("N. Archiv für sächsische Gesch.," 22, 1901, pp. 69 f., 76 (the text not quoted).

[4] Vol. $1^2$, p. 252.

[5] Noribergae, 1731, p. 124.

[6] Cp. "Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit," 1878, p. 16 ("Ein schon Frawe on Kinder").

[7] *Ibid.*, 1879, p. 296 ("Ein schon Weib, viel Rinder wentzig Kinder"). Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 682. Walther, "Bibelübersetzungen," points out concerning the origin of the story, that, owing to people being unaware of the mediæval translations of the Bible, "a German Bible immediately suggested the name of Luther."

"hoods" and "hats" of which they speak were forsooth the monks' and the cardinals', and the rhymester was all the time envying the gay life of the clergy; thus the poem, so we are told, throws a "lurid light on the esteem in which the mediæval monks and clergy were held by the laity committed to their care."—Yet the verses contain no reference whatever to ecclesiastics. "Hoods" were part of the layman's dress and presumably "hats," too. And after all, would it have been so very wicked even for a pious layman to wish to share in the good things possessed by the clergy? If satires on the mediæval clergy are sought for, sufficient are to be found without including this poor jingle.

### *Did Luther include Wives in the "Daily Bread" of the Our Father?*

Controversial writers have seen fit to accuse Luther of including wives in the "daily bread" for which we ask, and, in support of their charge, refer to his explanation of the fourth request of the Our Father. In point of fact in the Smaller Catechism the following is his teaching concerning this petition: It teaches us to ask God "for everything required for the sustenance and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothes, shoes and house, a farm, fields, cattle, money, goods, a *pious spouse*, pious children and servants, and good masters, etc.[1] In the Larger Catechism the list is similar: Food and drink, clothes, a house and farm, health of body, grain and fruits, a pious wife, children and servants," etc.[2] With all this surely no fault can be found.

### *Was Luther the originator of the proverb: "Who loves not woman, wine and song remains a fool his whole life long"?*

These verses are found neither in Luther's own writings nor in the old notes and written traditions concerning him. Joh. Heinrich Voss was the first to publish them in the "Wandsbeker Bote" in 1775, reprinting them in his Musenalmanach (1777). When he was charged by Senior Herrenschmidt with having foisted them on to Luther, he admitted that he was unable to give any account of their origin.[3] Several proverbs of a similar type, dating from mediæval times, have been cited.

A humorous remark of Luther's would appear, according to Seidemann, to refer to some earlier proverb linking together women, wine and song. The remark in question is contained in the MS. collection of the Table-Talk preserved at Gotha and

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 21, p. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, 1903, p. 681, n. 498. "Possibly he merely translated the old Italian rhyming proverb:

'Chi non ama il vino, la donna e il canto
Un pazzo egli sara e mai un santo,'

and, being himself an outspoken Voltairean, suppressed the 'santo.'" H. Böhmer, "Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung," p. 84; 2nd ed., p. 117 f.

known as "*Serotina*," now available in the work of E. Kroker, published in 1903.[1] The entire passage is not to be taken seriously: "To-morrow I have to lecture on Noe's drunkenness, so to-night I shall drink deeply so as to be able to speak of the naughty thing from experience. 'Not at all,' said Dr. Cordatus, 'you must do just the opposite.' Thereupon Luther remarked: 'Each country must be granted its own special fault. The Bohemians are gluttons, the Wends thieves, the Germans hard drinkers; for, my dear Cordatus, in what else does a German excel than '*ebrietate, praesertim talem, qui non diligit musicam et mulieres*'?" This saying of Luther's, which was noted down by Lauterbach and Weller, belongs to the year 1536.

### 7. The "Good Drink"

Among the imputations against Luther's private life most common among early controversial writers was that of being an habitual drunkard.

On the other hand, many of Luther's Protestant supporters down to our own day have been at pains to defend him against any charge of intemperance. Even scholarly modern biographers of Luther pass over this point in the most tactful silence, or with just the merest allusion, though they delight to dwell on his "natural enjoyment of life."

The following pages may help to show the failings of both methods, of that pursued by Luther's opponents, with their frequently quite unjustifiable exaggerations, and of that of his defenders with their refusal to discuss even the really existing grounds for complaint.[2] To begin with, Luther's enemies must resign themselves to abandon some of the proofs formerly adduced for his excessive addiction to drink.

#### *Unsatisfactory Witnesses.*

Luther's saying: "If I have a can of beer, I want the beer-barrel as well,"[3] has often been cited against him, the fact being overlooked, that he only made use of this expression in order to

[1] "Luther Tischreden Mathesische Sammlung," p. 376, with other passages under the heading: Lauterbach and Weller.

[2] Under the heading "Der 'gute Trunk' in den Lutheranklagen" the present writer published an article in the "Hist. Jahrb.," 26, 1905, p. 479 ff., which, under a revised form, is given anew in the following pages. In view of the strong verdicts frequently pronounced upon Luther's love of drink, we may point out that P. Albert Weiss, O P., in his "Lutherpsychologie" (Mainz, 1906, p. 185 f.; 2nd ed., p. 274), goes so far as to declare he was inclined to "tone down this or that opinion expressed by Grisar," but that he was thankful that he had "treated the subject with such moderation."

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 348, "Tischreden."

illustrate, by a very common example, the idea expressed in the heading of the chapter in which it occurs, viz. that "No one is ever satisfied." Everyone, he continues, desires to go one step higher, everyone wants to attain to something more, and, then, with other examples, he gives that mentioned above, where, for "I," we might equally well substitute "we," which indeed we find employed elsewhere in this same connection: "If we have one Gulden, we want a hundred."

Another passage, alleged, strange to say, by older writers, proves nothing: "We eat ourselves to death, and drink ourselves to death; we eat and drink ourselves into poverty and down to hell," Here Luther is merely speaking against the habit of drinking which had become so prevalent, and dominated some to such an extent that death and hell were the lamentable consequences to be feared. (See below, p. 308 f.)

Luther, wishing to drive a point home, says that he is not "drunk,"[1] but is writing "in the morning hours."[2] Must we infer, then, that he was in the habit of writing when drunk, or that in the afternoon he was not usually sober? Must he be considered drunk whenever he does not state plainly that he is sober? The truth is that such expressions were merely his way of speaking. In the important passage here under consideration he writes: "Possibly it may be asserted later that I did not sufficiently weigh what I say here against those who deny the presence of Christ in the Sacrament; but I am not drunk or giddy; I know what I am saying and what it will mean to me on Judgment Day and at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ."[3] Thus he is speaking most seriously and uses this curious verbal artifice simply to emphasise his earnestness. Were additional proof necessary it might be found in other passages; for instance: "Christ was not drunk when He said this," viz. the Eucharistic words of consecration, the literal meaning of which Luther is upholding against the Strasburg Sacramentarians.[4]

For the purpose of discrediting Luther an old opponent wrote: "The part that eating and drinking play in the life of the Reformer is evident from his letters to his Katey," and then went on to refer to the perfectly innocent passage where Luther says, that he preferred the beer and wine he was used to at home to what he was having at Dessau, whence he wrote. The rest of the letter has also been taken in an unnecessarily tragic sense:

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 26, p. 500; Erl. ed., 30, p. 363, in the "Vom Abendmal Christi Bekentnis." Cp. also "Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 189.

[2] Letter to Wenceslaus Link, March 19, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 317. The reference is, of course, to the words of Peter, Acts ii. 13–15.

[3] See n. 1.

[4] Kolde, "Analecta Lutherana," p. 71, in the "Relatio Gregorii Caselii" of November 29, 1525. Cp. "Werke," Weim. ed., 12, p. 234; Erl. ed., 29, p. 20, where he says that God was not drunk when He spoke the words; also *ibid.*, 8, p. 507=28, p. 63: Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul were not drunk when they wrote certain things.

"Yesterday I had some poor stuff to drink so that I had to begin singing: 'If I can't drink deep then I am sad, for a good deep drink ever makes me so glad.'" It is quite unnecessary to take this as a song sung by a "tipsy man"; it is simply a jesting reference to a popular ditty which quite possibly he had actually struck up to get rid of his annoyance at the quality of the liquor. "You would do well," he continues in the same jocular vein, "to send me over the whole cellar full of my usual wine, and a bottle of your beer as often as you can, else I shall not turn up any more for the new brew."[1]

No one who is familiar with his homely mode of speech will take offence at his calling himself on one occasion the "corpulent Doctor," and in any case this involves neither gluttony nor drunkenness. Moreover, the words occur in a serious connection, for we shall hear it from him during the last days of his life: "When I return again to Wittenberg I shall lay myself in my coffin and give the worms a corpulent doctor to feast on,"[2] referring, of course, to his natural stoutness. Offence has also been taken at a sentence met with in Luther's Table-Talk, where he says of his contemporaries of fifty years before: "How thin they [i.e. their ranks] have become"; from which it was inferred that he wished them a luxurious life and corpulence, and that he "regarded pot bellies as an ornament and a thing to be desired." From its context, however, the meaning of the word "thin" is clear. What Luther means is: How few of them remain in the land of the living.

But does not Luther in a letter of his let fall a remark scarcely beseeming one in his position, viz. that he would like to be more frequently in the company of those "good fellows, the students," "the beer is good, the parlour-maid pretty, the lads friendly (innig)"?[3] Such is one of the statements brought forward against him to show his inordinate love of drink. Yet, when examined, the letter is found to say nothing of any yearning of Luther's to join in the drinking-bouts of the students or of any interest of his in the maid. "Two honest students" had been recommended to Luther, and the letter informs its addressee, the Mansfeld Chancellor Müller at Eisleben, of the rumour that "too much was being consumed without any necessity by the pair"; the Chancellor was to inform the Count of Mansfeld of the fact in order that he (whose protégés they may have been) "might keep an eye on them." Then come the words: "What harm would friendly supervision do? The beer is good, the parlour-maid pretty and the lads young ('jung' not 'innig'); the students really behave very well, and my only regret is that,

[1] Letter of July 29, 1534, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 61 ("Briefwechsel," 10, p. 66).

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 437 ("Tischreden"). Cp. "Ratzebergers Handschriftl. Gesch.," ed. Neudecker, p. 131, and Jonas's obituary sermon on Luther in Walch's ed. of Luther's works, 21, Anhang, p. 373*.

[3] To Caspar Müller, March 18, 1535, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 137.

owing to my weak health, I am unable to be oftener with them." This letter surely does Luther credit. It testifies to his solicitude for the two youths committed to his care; seeing they are still "good and pious," he is anxious to preserve them from intemperance and other dangers, and regrets that, owing to his poor state of health, he is unable to have the pleasure of visiting these young fellows more often.

We must also caution our readers against an alleged quotation from Luther's contemporary, Simon Lemnius. Lemnius is reported to have said: "His excessive indulgence in wine and beer made Luther at times so ill that he quite expected to die." No such statement occurs in the works of Lemnius. What this writer actually did say of Luther on the score of drunkenness will be given later. The above words are a modern invention, though one author, strange to say, actually tacked them on to the authentic passage in Lemnius as though they had belonged to the latter.

Again, it has been said that excessive indulgence in some Malvasian wine was, on Luther's own admission, the cause of a malady which troubled him for a considerable time in 1529. Luther's letter in question speaks, however, of a "severe and almost fatal catarrh," which lasted for a long time and almost deprived him of his voice; others, too, says Luther, had suffered from the catarrh (no great wonder in the month of March or April), but not to the same extent as he. He had imprudently aggravated the trouble possibly by preaching too energetically or—and here comes the incriminating passage—"by drinking some adulterated Malvasian to the health of Amsdorf." Such were his words to his confidential friend Jonas. The fact is that a wine so expensive as Malvasian was then very liable to being adulterated, the demand far exceeding the supply of this beverage, which was always expected to figure on the table on great occasions. At any rate, there is no mention here of Luther's illness having arisen from continuous and excessive indulgence in wine. At the conclusion of this chapter we shall have to consider a similar passage.

In the above we have examined about a dozen witnesses, whose testimony has been shown quite valueless to prove Luther's alleged devotion to drink.

The conclusions which have been drawn from the character of certain of Luther's writings or utterances are also worthless. It has been affirmed that his "Wider das Bapstum vom Teuffel gestifft" could only have been written "under the excitement produced by drink," and that many of his sayings, such as his exhortation to "pray for Our Lord God," could have been uttered "only by a drunken man."

Yet his incredible hatred sufficed of itself to explain the frenzy of his utterances, nor must we forget that some of his expressions, out of place though they may seem, were chosen as best fitted to appeal to the populace. "Pray for Our Lord God," interpreted in the light of other similar expresions used by him, means: Pray for the interests of our Lord God and of the new Evangel.

*Other Witnesses, Friendly and Hostile.*

Before proceeding to scrutinise in detail the more cogent testimonies, we may remark that one trait in Luther's character, that namely which caused him to be called the "merry boon companion," might possibly be invoked in support of the charge now under consideration.

It was his struggle with the gloomy moods to which he was so prone that drove Luther into cheerful company and to seek relief in congenial conversation and in liquor. That he was not over-scrupulous concerning indulgence in the latter comfort is attested by his own words, viz. that he was too fond of jests and convivial gatherings ("*iocis aut conviviis excedere*"), and that the world had some grounds for taking offence ("*inveniat in me quo offendatur et cadat*").[1] Yet he was very desirous of avoiding such accusations on the part of his opponents, though, as he puts it, they "calumniate even what is best and most inoffensive."[2] When he says elsewhere in his usual gross way: "They spy out everything that concerns me, and no sooner do I pass a motion than they smell it at Rome,"[3] this exclamation was called forth by the scandalous excess in drinking of which a member of his family was habitually guilty.

Then, again, the drinking habits of the Germans of those days must be borne in mind. A man had to be a very hard drinker to gain the reputation of being a drunkard. Instances will be given later showing how zealously Luther attacked the vice of drunkenness in Germany. At that time a man (even though a theologian or other person much exposed to the gaze of the public) was free to imbibe far more than was good for him without remarks being made or his conduct censured.

Luther's extraordinary industry and the astounding number of his literary productions must likewise not be lost sight of. We are compelled to ask ourselves whether it is likely that the man who wrote works so numerous and profound, in the midst, too, of the many other cares which pressed on him, was addicted to habitual drunkenness. How could the physical capacity for undertaking and executing such immense labours, and the energy requisite

[1] "Briefwechsel Bugenhagens," ed. O. Vogt, 1888, p. 64 ff.
[2] To Spalatin, August 15, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 218.
[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 141. Cp. vol. ii., p. 133 f.

for the long, uninterrupted religious and literary struggle into which Luther threw himself, be found in one who unceasingly quenched an excessive thirst with alcoholic drink? Kawerau has sketched Luther's "colossal mental productivity" during the one year 1529, a year in which he was not engaged in any of his accustomed literary feuds.[1] Works published during that year cover, in the Weimar edition, 287 pages, in imperial octavo, his lectures on Deuteronomy 247 pages and the notes of his sermons (some, however, in duplicate) 824 pages. In addition to this he was at work on his German translation of the Old Testament, completing the Pentateuch and making a beginning with the remaining historical books. Besides this he wrote in that year countless letters, of which comparatively few, viz. 112, are still extant. He also undertook five short journeys lasting together about a fortnight.

During the short and anxious period, amounting to 173 days, which he spent, in 1530, in the Castle of Coburg (it is to this time that some of the charges of excessive drinking refer), he wrote and forwarded to the press various biblical expositions which in the Erlangen edition occupy 718 pages in small octavo, re-wrote in its entirety "Von den Schlüsseln," a work of 87 pages, was all the while busy with his translation of Jeremias, of a portion of Ezechiel and all the minor Prophets, and finally wrote at least the 128 letters and memoranda which are still extant.[2] Yet, for whole days during this sojourn in the Coburg, he was plagued with noises in the head and giddiness, results, no doubt, of nervous excitement.

That such productivity would not have been possible "without meditation and study"[3] is, however, not quite true in his case. Luther wrote most of his works without reflection and without any real study, merely jotting down carelessly whatever his lively fancy suggested.

Thus we may rightly ask whether the accusation of habitual participation in drinking-bouts and constant private excess is compatible with the work he produced.

In the case of reports of an unfavourable nature it is of course necessary to examine their origin carefully; this

[1] "Etwas vom kranken Luther" ("Deutsch-evangel. Blätter," 29, 1904), p. 303 ff., p. 306.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 311 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 306.

unfortunately is not always done. As we already had occasion to remark when dealing with the imputations against his moral character, it makes all the difference whether the witness against him is a Catholic opponent or represents the New Evangel. Amongst Catholics, again, we must discriminate between foreigners, who were ignorant of German customs and who sometimes wrote merely on hearsay, and Luther's German compatriots. We shall not characterise the method of those of Luther's defenders who simply refuse to listen to his opponents on the ground that, one and all, they are prejudiced.

Wolfgang Musculus (Mäuslin), an Evangelical theologian, in the account of a journey in May, 1536, during which he had visited Luther, gives an interesting and unbiassed report of what he saw at Wittenberg.[1] On May 29, Luther came, bringing with him Melanchthon and Lucas Cranach, to dine as Mäuslin's guest at the inn where he was staying. There all had their share of the wine. "When dinner was over," says the chronicler, "we all went to the house of Master Lucas, the painter, where we had another drink. . . .[2] After this we escorted Luther home, where we drank in true Saxon style. He was marvellously cheerful and promised everything most readily" (i.e. probably all that Musculus proposed concerning the agreement to be come to with the Zwinglians, of whom Musculus was one. The allusion to the "Saxon style" reminds us of Count Hoyer's reference to the "custom at Mansfeld" (vol. ii., p. 131). Luther's country does not seem to have been noted for its temperance.

Melanchthon, as one of his pupils relates in the "*Dicta Melanchthoniana,*" tells how on a certain day in March, 1523: "Before dinner ('*ante coenam*')" Luther, with two intimates, Justus Jonas and Jacob Probst, the Pastor of Bremen, arrived at Schweinitz near Wittenberg. Here, owing to indigestion, "*cruditas,*" Luther was sick in a room. In order to remove the bad impression made on the servant who had to clean the apartment, Jonas said: "Do not be surprised, my good fellow, the Doctor does this sort of thing every day." By this he certainly did not mean, as some have thought, that Luther was in the habit of being sick every day as the result of drink; he was merely trying to shield his friend in an embarrassing situation by alleging a permanent illness. Pastor Probst, however, according to Melanchthon's story, betrayed Jonas by exclaiming: "What a fine excuse!" Jonas thereupon seized him by the throat and said: "Hold your tongue!" At table the pastor was anxious to return to the matter, but Jonas was able to cut him short. Melanchthon concludes the story with a touch of

[1] The "Itinerarium," in Kolde, "Analecta Lutherana," p. 229. From the Bern Archives.

[2] The dots are Kolde's.

sarcasm : "*Hoc est quando posteriora intelliguntur ex prioribus.*" Was the sickness in this case due to previous drinking ?

A letter, written by Luther himself, perhaps will help to explain the matter. On the eve of his return to Wittenberg he writes from Schweinitz on Oculi Sunday, March 8, 1523, to his friend the Court Chaplain Spalatin, that he had come to Schweinitz, where the Elector's castle stood, in order to celebrate with the father the baptism of the son of a convert Jew named Bernard. "We drank good, pure wine from the Elector's cellar," he says ; "we should indeed be grand Evangelicals if we feasted to the same extent on the Evangel. . . . Please excuse us to the Prince for having drunk so much of his Grüneberger wine ('*quod tantum vini Gornbergici liguricrimus*'). Jonas and his wife greet you, also the godfathers, godmothers and myself ; three virgins were present, certainly Jonas, for, as he has no child, we call him a virgin."[1] The letter, curiously disconnected and containing such strange jests, quite gives the impression of having been written after such a festive gathering as that described by the writer.

In connection with Melanchthon's story some Protestants have recently urged that, in 1523, Luther was subject to attacks of "sudden indisposition" which came on him in the morning and from which he found relief in vomiting, and that the above incident is explained by this circumstance ; the fact that he was sick "before the meal and after a lengthy drive proves that we have to do with a result not of intemperance but of nervous irritation." Of such "sudden indispositions" arising from nervousness we, however, hear nothing, either during that year or for long after. None of the sources mention anything of the kind. On the contrary, at Whitsun, 1523, Luther wrote to Nicholas Hausmann that he felt "fairly well" ("*satis bene valeo*") ; that he was of a nervous temperament is of course true, but that the morning hours were, as a rule, his worst we only begin to learn from his letters in 1530 and 1532 ; there, moreover, he does not mention sickness, but merely "giddiness and the attacks of Satan," which were wont to come on him before breakfast, ("*prandium*,"[2] a meal taken about 9 or 10 a.m.). Melanchthon's story speaks, however, not of the morning at all, but of the time before the "*coena*" (i.e. the principal meal, taken about 5 p.m.), when Luther was presumably no longer fasting.

Still, it would be better not to lay too much stress on this isolated particular incident.[3]

Next in the series of statements coming from preachers of the new Evangel, we meet that of Johann Agricola, who, according

[1] "Briefwechsel," 4, p. 96.

[2] Letter of February 27, 1532, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 155.

[3] A passage from a letter of Melanchthon's to Veit Dietrich, dated March 15, 1537 ("Corp. ref.," 3, p. 327), deserves consideration : "*Secuta est hos agones* (his mental struggles or temptations), *ut fit, magna debilitas ; accessit etiam cruditas, quam vigiliae, vomitus et caetera incommoda multa auxerunt.*"

to Thiele, in the recently discovered notes of his (above, p. 216), when he had already separated from Luther, represents him as a "drunken profligate," "who gave the rein to his passions and whom only his wife's sway could influence for good." Agricola says that Luther had contemptuously put aside certain letters of his, but "at last read them one morning before the wine had mounted to his head ('*mane, nondum vino calefactus*'). Then he showed himself willing to take me into favour again"; this being the result of Katey's intercession.

After this we have the testimony of the Swiss theologian, Leo Judæ, who, as Kolde tells us,[1] in the letter to Bucer quoted above (p. 277) and dated April 24, 1534, "reproaches Luther with drunkenness and all manner of things, and declares that such a bishop he would not tolerate even in the tiniest diocese."

Valentine Ickelsamer, in 1525, voices the "fanatics," whom Luther was attacking so vigorously, in his complaint, that the latter was "careless and heedless amidst all our needs, and spent his time in utter unconcern with the beer-swillers"; before this he had already said: "I am well acquainted with your behaviour, having been for a while a student at Wittenberg; I will, however, say nothing of your gold finger-ring, which gives scandal to so many people, or of the pleasant room overlooking the water where you drink and make merry with the other doctors and gentlemen."[2] Neither Ickelsamer nor his friends formulate against Luther any explicit charge of startling or habitual excess. His daily habits, as just depicted, seemed to them to be at variance with his claim to being a divinely appointed preacher, called to raise mankind to higher things, but this was chiefly on account of their own peculiar narrow mysticism. It was from the same standpoint that, wishing to absolve himself from the charge of "inciting to rebellion," Thomas Münzer, in 1524, writes in his "Schutzrede"[3] against the "witless, wanton lump of flesh at Wittenberg," also twitting Luther with his "luxurious living" (vol. ii., p. 131), i.e. the daintiness of his food.

With regard to Simon Lemnius, it will suffice to refer to the passage already adduced (p. 274): "Luther boasts of being an evangelical bishop; how then comes it that he lives so far from temperately, being wont to surfeit himself with food and drink?" It is unnecessary to repeat how much caution must be exercised in appealing to this writer's statements.

Among Catholic critics the first place is taken by the theologian, Ambrosius Catharinus, an Italian who lived far from Germany. His statement regarding Luther's dancing and drinking has already been given (p. 276). This, together with many other of

[1] The context is unfortunately not given by Kolde, no more here than in the case of Musculus. A copy of the letter is, he says, found in the Baum Thesaurus of the Strasburg University Library.

[2] "Clag etlicher Brüder," etc., ed. Enders ("Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke," No. 118, 1893), p. 48.

[3] "Hochverursachte Schutzrede," etc., ed. Enders, *ibid.*, p. 18 ff.

his strictures[1] on Luther's teaching and work, were collected by Cochlæus. Catharinus was present at the Council of Trent from 1546–1547 and such reports as these may there have reached his ears. That Luther danced, or as Catharinus says, even led the dances, is not vouched for in any source. Only concerning Melanchthon have we a credible report, that he "sometimes danced." On the other hand, we do know that Luther was frequently present at balls, weddings, christenings and other such occasions when food and drink were to be had in plenty. So distinguished and pleasant a guest was naturally much in demand, as Luther himself tells us on several occasions.

Luther's letter to Spalatin, on January 14, 1524, concerning the (real or imaginary) agent sent by King Ferdinand to enquire into his life at Wittenberg, also speaks of the report carried to Court of his intercourse with women and habits of drunkenness (vol. ii., p. 132 f.).

Shortly before, in 1522, Count Hoyer of Mansfeld, a Catholic, wrote in a letter to Count Ulrich of Helfenstein, brought to light by a Protestant historian, "that Luther was a thorough scoundrel, who drank deeply, as was the custom at Mansfeld, played the lute, etc." (vol. ii., p. 131). If, as we find recounted elsewhere, Luther, on his journey to the Diet, and at Worms itself, partook freely of the costly wines in which his enthusiastic friends pledged him, this was, after all, no great crime. It is probable, however, that some worse tales to Luther's discredit in this matter of drinking had come to Hoyer's ear.

At the time of the Diet of Worms, Aleander, the Papal Legato there present, indeed writes that Luther was "addicted to drunkenness,"[2] but the credulous diplomat probably trusted to what he heard from parties hostile to Luther and little acquainted with him. (See vol. ii., p. 78 f.) It is also a fact that, to Italians imbued with the idea that the Germans were drunkards, even quite moderate drinking might seem scandalous.

Cochlæus says of Luther in 1524: "According to what I hear, in his excessive indulgence in beer, Luther is worse than a debauchee."[3] Here again we have merely an echo of statements made by strangers, albeit in this instance stronger and more positive.—Less weight is to be attached to the account of Jacob Ziegler of Landau, who writes from Rome to Erasmus on February 16, 1522, that there Luther was regarded as "given to fornication and tippling," adding that he was considered as the precursor of Antichrist.[4]—Of the inhabitants of Wittenberg generally Ulrich Zasius complains, in a letter of December 21,

[1] "De consideratione praesentium temporum," Venetiis, 1547. Cochlæus's "De persona et doctrina M. Lutheri iudicium fratris A. Catharini," etc., Moguntiae, 1548, gives the words on fol. C. 2a.

[2] Brieger, "Aleander und Luther," p. 170; "alla quale (ebrietà) è deditissimo."

[3] "Helluone in crapula et ebrietate cervisiaria, ut audio, foedior."

[4] Cp. "Archiv für Reformationsgesch.," "Texte und Untersuchungen," 3 Jahrg., Hft. 1, p. 79, article by P. Kalkoff, "Römische Urteile über Luther und Erasmus im Jahre 1521." See our vol. ii., p. 133.

1521, to Thomas Blaurer, that it was reported they ran almost daily to communion but afterwards swilled beer to such an extent that they were unable to recognise each other.[1] To his other charges against the life led there and against the heads of the movement, Blaurer replied, but, curiously enough, the complaint of drunkenness he does not even refer to.[2] From the detailed description given by a Catholic Canon of Wittenberg on December 29, 1521, we do, however, learn that the greatest abuses prevailed in connection with the Supper, and that some even communicated who had previously been indulging in brandy.[3]

The last witness had nothing to say of Luther personally. On the other hand, another does state that, the night before his death, he was "*plane obrutus potu.*" This, however, comes from a later writer, who lived far away and has shown himself otherwise untrustworthy.[4]

Another less unreliable report also has to do with Luther's death-bed. Johann Landau, the Mansfeld apothecary, who was a Catholic, and had occasion to handle Luther's corpse, left the following in the notes he made: "In consequence of excessive eating and drinking the body was full of corrupt juices," Luther had "exceeded in the use of sweet foreign wines." "It is said," he continues, "that he drank every day at noon and in the evening a sextar of rich foreign wine."[5] This statement does not appear to be restricted to the last days of Luther's life, which were spent with Count Mansfeld. It is well known that Luther died after a meal. What amount the "sextar" and the "stuebchen," to be mentioned immediately, represented has not yet been determined, as the measures differed so much in various parts of the country. The sextar, according to G. Agricola, was usually a quarter of the stuebchen, as, according to him, twenty-four sextars or six stuebchen went to one amphora; the sextar itself contained four gills."[6] In a letter of Luther's, dating from the period of his stay at Mansfeld, we find the following: "We live well here," he writes to Katey, "and the council allows me for each meal half a gallon of excellent Rheinfall. Sometimes I drink it with my companions. The wine produced here is also good and the Naumburg beer quite capital."[7] Rheinfall (more correctly Reinfal) was a southern wine then highly prized.[8] Luther, as a rule, preferred to keep to Naumburg beer.[9]

[1] "Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer," 1, 1908, p. 43; "*Tui Wittenbergenses velut quotidie communicant et mox cerevisia inebriantur, ut sese aliquando non cognoscant, ita enim fertur.*"

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 58–68. [3] Barge, "Karlstadt," 2, p. 558.

[4] Henr. Sedulius, O.S.F., "Praescriptiones adv. haereses," Antwerp, 1606, p. 210. It was he who published the false document concerning Luther's alleged suicide (see vol. vi., xxxix. 3).

[5] Paulus, "Luthers Lebensende," 1898, p. 70.

[6] "De mensuris," Basileae, 1550, pp. 4, 338.

[7] Luther to Katey, February 7, 1546, Letters, ed. De Wette, 5, p 788. [8] Grimm, "Deutsches Wörterbuch," 8, p. 700.

[9] Cp. the letter addressed to Katey on February 1, 1546, p. 786: "I drink Neunburgish beer."

*Luther's Own Comments on the "Good Drink."*

The following statements of Luther's concerning his indulgence in spirituous liquors are especially noteworthy; of these some have been quoted without sufficient attention being paid to their real meaning.

"Know that all goes well with me here," Luther writes in 1540 from Weimar to his Katey, who was anxious about him; "I feed like a Bohemian, and swill like a German, for which God be thanked, Amen."[1] Soon after he repeats, in a letter to the same addressee, the phrase which has since grown famous, this time in a slightly amended form: Know "that we are well and cheerful here, thanks be to God; we feed like Bohemians, though not too much, and swill like Germans, not deeply but with jollity."[2] He is fond of thus speaking of his "feeding and swilling," though, such expressions being less unconventional then than now, stress must not be laid on them. In both letters he was clearly seeking by his jests to reassure his wife, who was concerned for his health. During his last weeks at Eisleben he also wrote to Katey: "We have plenty on which to feed and swill."[3]

"If the Lord God holds me excused," he says in a famous utterance in the Table-Talk, "for having plagued Him for quite twenty years by celebrating Mass, He assuredly will excuse me for sometimes indulging in a drink to His honour; God grant it and let the world take it as it will."[4]

Of the last decade of Luther's life his pupil Mathesius relates, that, in the evening, "if not inclined for sleep, he had to take a draught to promote it, often making excuse for so doing: 'You young fellows must not mind if our Elector and an old chap like me take a generous drink; we have to try and find our pillow and our bolster in the tankard.'"[5] The same witness relates another utterance of about the same time: "He came home from a party and

[1] On July 2, 1540, "Briefwechsel," ed. Burkhardt, p. 357.

[2] On July 16, 1540, Letters, ed. De Wette, 5, p. 298. De Wette's edition of this letter is not altogether trustworthy. Cp. Burkhardt, "Briefe Luthers," p. 358.

[3] On February 6, 1546, *ibid.*, p. 786.

[4] From the written notes of Veit Dietrich (the "most reliable authority on the Table-Talk"), see Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 498. Cp. a parallel passage in "Werke," Erl. ed., 57, p. 135.

[5] Mathesius, "Historien," 1566, p. 151.

drank the health of a guest: 'I must make merry to-day, for I have received bad tidings; for this there is no better cure than a fervent Paternoster and a brave heart. For the demon of melancholy is much put out when a man insists upon being merry.' "[1]

Here we have two reasons, want of sleep and depression resulting from bad news, which induced him to have a "good drink." A third reason was furnished by his temptations to doubt and vacillate in faith. The "good drink" must not, however, be too deep as it "recently was at the Electoral couchee at Torgau, where, not satisfied with the usual measures, they pledged each other in half-gallon cans. That they called a good drink. *Sic inventa lege inventa est et fraus legis.*"[2]

Luther's advice to his pupil Hieronymus Weller, when the latter was tempted and troubled, as stated above (p. 175), was to follow his example and "to drink deeper and jest more freely," and to answer the devil when he objected to such drinking, that "he would drink all the more because he forbade it"; he himself (Luther), for no other reason, was wont to drink more deeply and talk more freely than to scorn the devil by his "hard drinking."[3] "When troubled with gloomy thoughts," he declared on another occasion, it was his habit "to have a good pull at the beer"; Melanchthon had a different sort of remedy, viz. consulting the stars; Luther, however, considered his practice the better one.[4]

These and such-like utterances circulated far and wide, often in a highly exaggerated form, and Luther had only himself to thank if many Catholics, on the strength of them, came to regard him as a regular drunkard. This impression was in no way diminished by the rough humour which accompanied his talk of eating and drinking. People then were perfectly acquainted with the fact that the Table-Talk was regarded, even by some enthusiastic Lutherans, as only a half revelation, the truth being that they did not make sufficient allowance for Luther's vein of humour and exaggeration.

It was, however, quite seriously that Luther spoke in

[1] Mathesius, "Historien," 1566, p. 152.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 451 ("Tischreden").
[3] Letter of 1530 (July ?), "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 159 *seq.*
[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 516, from Veit Dietrich's MS.

August, 1540, when the excessive drinking of the miners was discussed at table: "It is not well," he said, "but if they work hard for the rest of the week, then we must allow them some relaxation (at the week-end). Their work is hard and very dangerous and some allowance must be made for the custom of the country. I, too, have an occasional tipple, but not everybody must follow my example, for not all have the work to do that I have."[1] Here, accordingly, we have a fourth reason alleged in excuse of his drinking, possibly the most usual and practical one, viz. his fatiguing work.—In May of the same year he expressed his opinion of the extent to which drinking might be allowable in certain circles; this he did because he had been accused of not reproving drunkenness at the Court: "On the contrary," he says, "I have spoken strongly about it before the whole Court; truly I spoke forcibly and severely to the nobles, reproaching them with tempting and corrupting the Prince. This greatly pleased the old gentleman [the Elector Johann], for he lived temperately. . . . I said to the nobles: 'You ought to employ yourselves after dinner in the Palæstra or in some other good exercise, after which you might have a good drink, for drinking is permissible, but drunkenness never (*ebrietas est ferenda, sed ebriositas minime*).'"[2] "Cheerful people," he said in May or June, "may sometimes indulge more freely in wine," but if drinking makes a man angry, he must avoid it like "poison." These words were meant for his nephew, Hans Polner, who was in the habit of returning to Luther's house much the worse for drink. With him Luther was very wroth: "On your account I am ill-spoken of by foreigners. My foes spy out everything that goes on about me. . . . When you do some mischief while drunk, you forget what shame you are bringing not only upon me and on my house, but on the town, the Church and the Evangel. Others after a drinking-

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 185.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 95. Cp. Mathesius's notes in Loesche, "Analecta Lutherana et Melanthoniana," p. 100: "Then I would permit you a good drink; *nam ebrietudo est ferenda, non ebriositas.*" Forcellini's definition: "*ebriositas=propensio in ebrietatem.*" According to Loesche, Luther himself invented the word "*ebrietudo.*" Luther says of the Elector Johann Frederick in his work, "Wider Hans Worst": "Sometimes he takes a drink too much, which we are sorry to see," but it was untrue that he was "a drunkard and led a disorderly life" ("Werke," Erl. ed., $26^2$, p. 74).

bout are merry and friendly; such was the case with my father; they simply sing and jest; but you, you fly into a rage."[1]

Luther, when preaching to the people, often denounced the prevalent habit of drinking, a circumstance which must not be overlooked when passing judgment upon him. The German vice of drunkenness which he saw increasing around him in the most alarming manner caused him such distress, that he exclaimed in one of his postils: "Our poor German land is chastised and plagued with this devil of drink, and altogether drowned in this vice, so that life and limb, possessions and honour, are shamefully lost while people lead the life of swine, so that, had we to depict Germany, we should have to show it under the image of a sow."[2] Only "the little children, virgins and women" were exempt from the malady; "unless God strikes at this vice by a national calamity everything will go down to the abyss, all sodden through and through with drink."[3] Was this the way to be grateful "to the light of the Evangel" which had burst upon Germany?[4] His question shows that he was speaking primarily of the conditions prevailing under the new Evangel. Looking back on the Catholic past he has perforce to admit, that, although this vice was by no means unknown then, yet "I remember that when I was young it [drunkenness] was looked upon by the nobility as a great shame, and that worthy gentry and Princes sought to combat it by wise prohibitions and penalties; but now it is even worse and more prevalent amongst them than amongst the peasants; so far has it come that even Princes and men of gentle birth learn it from their squires, and are not ashamed of it; it is regarded as honourable and quite a virtue by Princes, nobles and burghers, so that whosoever refuses to become a sodden brute is despised."[5]

In powerful passages such as these he assails the vice from both the natural and the supernatural standpoint. Yet his chief complaint is not so much its existence as its appalling extent; his reproofs are intended for those who "get drunk daily," for those "maddened and sodden with drink," for those who "day and night are ever pouring the

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 141.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., $8^2$, p. 294.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 294, 296
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 297; cp. p. 292.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 293.

liquor down their throats." He expressly states that he is willing to be lenient in cases where a man is drunk only now and again. "It may be borne with and overlooked," he says in the sermon quoted, "if from time to time a person by mistake takes a glass too much, or, after being exhausted by labour and toil, gets a little the worse for drink."[1]

In 1534, in an exposition of Psalm ci., where he describes the doings of the "Secular Estate," he is no less hopeless concerning this plague which afflicts Germany: "Every country must have its own devil; our German devil is a good skin of wine and surely his name is Swill"; until the last day eternal thirst would remain the German's curse; it was quite useless to seek to remedy matters, Swill still remained the all-powerful god.[2] More dignified language would assuredly have been better in place here and elsewhere where he deals with this subject. For quaint homeliness it would, however, be hard to beat him; referring to their drinking habits, he tells the great men at the Court: "In the morning you really look as though your heads had been pickled in brine."[3] Yet, from the very passage in the Table-Talk where this is recounted, we learn that he said to the guests, again in a far too indulgent strain: "The Lord God must account the drunkenness of us Germans a mere daily [i.e. venial] sin, for we are unable to give it up; nevertheless, it is a shameful curse, harmful alike to body, soul and property."

### *Witnesses to Luther's Temperate Habits.*

Within Luther's camp the chief witnesses to his temperate habits are Melanchthon and Mathesius.

Melanchthon in his formal panegyric on the deceased says, that "though a stout man, he was very moderate in eating and drinking ('*natura valde modici cibi et potus*'). I have seen him, when quite in good health, abstaining entirely from food and drink for four days. At other times I frequently saw him content himself for many days with a little bread with kippers."[4] His four days' abstinence, however, probably coincided with one of his attacks—"temptations," which, as we know from Ratzeberger, his medical adviser, were usually accompanied by intense dislike for food. Besides, before his marriage, Luther

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $8^2$, p. 295. [2] *Ibid.*, 39, p. 353.
[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 95.
[4] "Vita Lutheri" ("*Vitæ quatuor reformatorum*," ed. A. T. Neander (n. 5, p. 5).

had not the same attention and care he received later from his wife. It is not unlikely that Melanchthon was thinking of this period when he speaks of the "bread and kippers," for the passage really refers to the beginning of his acquaintanceship with Luther, possibly even to his monastic days. However this may be, we must not forget that the clause is part of a panegyric.

Mathesius, Luther's attentive pupil and admirer, says of him in his sermons, that Luther, "although he was somewhat corpulent, ate and drank little and rarely anything out of the common, but contented himself with ordinary food. In the evening, if not inclined to sleep, he had to take a draught to promote it, often making excuse for so doing."[1]

That Luther was perfectly content "without anything out of the common" is confirmed by other writers, and concerning the general frugality of his household there can be no question. In this respect we may well believe what Mathesius says, for he was a regular attendant at Luther's evening table in the forties of the century. His assertion that Luther "drank but little" must, however, be considered in the light of other of his statements.

What Mathesius thought of the "sleeping-draught" and the feasts at which, so he relates, Luther assisted from time to time, appears from a discourse incorporated by him in his "Wedding-sermons." Here he speaks of the "noble juice of the grape and how we can make use of it in a godly fashion and with a good conscience"; he is simply the mouthpiece of Luther. Like Luther, he condemns gluttony and "bestial drunkenness," but is so indulgent in the matter of cheerful carousing that a Protestant Canon in the eighteenth century declared, that Mathesius had gone astray in his sermon on the use of wine.[2] Mathesius says that we must have "a certain amount of patience" with those who sometimes, for some quite valid reason, "get a little tipsy," or "kick over the traces," provided they "don't do so every day" and that "the next morning they are heartily sorry for it"; the learned were quite right in distinguishing between "*ebriositas*" and "*ebrietas*"; if a ruling Prince had worked industriously all day, or a scholar had "read and studied till his head swam," such busy and much-tired people, if they chose "in the evening to drink

[1] "Historien," 1566, p. 151. Then follows the passage referred to on p. 305 concerning Luther and the Elector.

[2] See Loesche's Introduction to the edition mentioned in the following note.

away their cares and heavy thoughts, must be permitted some over-indulgence, particularly if it does not hinder them in the morning from praying, studying and working."[1]

This is the exact counterpart of Luther's theory and practice as already described, in the distinction made between "*ebriositas*" and "*ebrietas*," in the statement that drunkenness is no more than a venial sin, in the unseemly and jocose tone employed when speaking of tipsiness, and in the license accorded those who (like Luther) had much work to do, or (again, like Luther), were plagued with "gloomy thoughts." The other conditions are also noteworthy, viz. that it must not be of "daily occurrence" and that the offender must afterwards be "heartily sorry"; in such a case we must be tolerant. All this agrees with Luther's own teaching.

Such passages, coming from the master and his devoted disciple, must be taken as the foundation on which to base our judgment. Such general statements of principle must carry more weight than isolated instances of Luther's actual practice, more even than the various testimonies considered above. In the eyes of the impartial historian, moreover, the various elements will be seen to fit into each other so as to form a whole, the elements being on the one hand the highly questionable principle we have just heard expressed, and on the other his own admissions concerning his practice, supplemented by the testimony of outsiders.

In the first place, there is no doubt that his theory was dangerously lax. We need only call to mind the string of reasons given in vindication of a "good drink" and mere "*ebrietas*." Such excuses were not only insufficient but might easily be adduced daily in ever-increasing number. Luther's limitation of the permission to occasional bouts, etc., was altogether illusory and constituted no real barrier against excess. How could such theories, we may well ask, promote temperance and self-denial? Instead of resisting the lower impulses of nature they give the reins to license.

[1] G. Mathesius, "Hochzeitspredigten," ed. Loesche, Prague, 1897 ("Bibliothek deutscher Schriftsteller aus Böhmen," Bd. 6). The sermon in question was delivered in a castle in 1553 (pp. 311–335). Loesche says of the same: "It is not necessary to be a rabid teetotaller to feel that Urbanus—from the title of the sermon—treads dangerous ground, and would to-day be considered quite scandalously lax." Cp. N. P[aulus] in the Köln. Volksztng., 1904, No. 623: on Luther's admission "I also tipple."

They are part and parcel of the phenomenon so noticeable in early Lutheranism, where Christian endeavour, owing to the discredit with which penance and good works were overwhelmed, was not allowed to rise above the level of ordinary life, and indeed often failed to attain even to this standard. How different sound the injunctions of Christ and His Apostles to the devoted followers of the true Gospel: Take up thy cross; resist the flesh and all its lusts; be sober and watch.

The result as regards Luther's practice must on the whole be considered as unfavourable, though it is not of course so well known to us as his theory. It may also, quite possibly, have varied at different periods of his life, for instance, may not have been the same when Mathesius was acquainted with him, i.e. when his mode of life had become more regular, as when Count Hoyer of Mansfeld wrote so scornfully after the Diet of Worms. Nevertheless, Luther's vigorous denunciation of habitual drunkenness on the one hand, and the extraordinary amount of work he contrived to get through on the other, also the absence of any very damaging or definite charge by those who had every opportunity of observing him at Wittenberg, for instance, the hostile Anabaptists and other "sectarians," all this leads us to infer, that he availed himself of his theories only to a very limited extent. His own statements, however, as well as those of his friends and opponents, enable us to see that his lax principle, "*ebrietas est ferenda*," was not without its effects upon his habits of life. The allegation of his joy of living, and his healthy love of the things of sense, does not avail to explain away his own admissions, nor what others laid to his charge. The worst of it is, that we gain the impression that the lax theory was conceived to suit his own case, for all the reasons which he held to excuse the "good drink" and the subsequent "*ebrietas*" were present in his case—depression caused by bad news, cares and gloomy thoughts, pressure of work, temptations to sadness and doubts, sleeplessness and mental exhaustion.

### *From the Cellar and the Tap-Room.*

The task remains of considering certain further traits in Luther's life with regard to his indulgence in drinking.

During the first part of his public career Luther himself

speaks of the temptation to excessive eating and drinking and other bad habits to which he was exposed. This he did in 1519 in his remarkably frank confession to his superior Staupitz.[1] Here the expression "*crapula*" must be taken more seriously than on another occasion when, in a letter to a friend written from the Wartburg in the midst of his arduous labours, he describes himself as "sitting idle, and '*crapulosus*.'"[2]

After Luther's marriage, when he had settled down comfortably in the Black Monastery, it was Catherine, who, agreeably with the then custom, brewed the beer at home. It seems, however, to have been of inferior quality, indeed not fit to set before his guests. That he had several sorts of wine in his cellar we learn on the occasion of the marriage of his niece Lena in 1538. He complains that in Germany it was very hard to buy "a really trustworthy drink," as even the carriers adulterated the wines on the way.[3]

As already stated, beer was his usual drink. Whilst he was "drinking Wittenberg beer with Philip and Amsdorf," he said as early as 1522, in a well-known passage, "the Papacy had been weakened through the Word of God" which he had preached.[4]

It was, however, with wine that on great occasions the ample "Catechismusglas" (see above, p. 219) was filled.[5] How much this bowl contained which Luther, though not his guest Agricola, could empty at one draught, has not been determined, though illustrations of it were thought to exist. Agricola's statement concerning his vain attempt to drain it leads us to conclude that the famous glass was of considerable size. It impresses one strangely to learn that Luther occasionally toasted his guests in a crystal beaker

[1] Letter of February 20, 1519, "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 431: "*expositus et involutus . . . crapulae.*" Cp. our vol. i., p. 368. Luther uses the word "*crapulatus*" in the sense of "*ebrius*," "Werke," Weim. ed., 3, pp. 559 and 596. In the larger Commentary on Galatians, however, a distinction is made between "*ebrietas*" and "*crapula*," 3, pp. 47 and 53; cp. the smaller Commentary (1519), Weim. ed., 2, p. 591: "*Commessatio, quae* Lc. xxi. 34 [*crapula*] *dicitur; sicut ebrietas nimium bibendo, ita crapula nimium comedendo gravat corda.*"

[2] To Spalatin, May 14, 1521, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 154. Cp. our vol. ii., pp. 82, 87, 94.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 497.

[4] See above, p. 219.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., 58, p. 337 ("Tischreden"): "A glass with three ridges . . . down to the first the Ten Commandments, down to the second the Creed, the third with the [Our Father of the] Catechism in full."

reputed to have once belonged to St. Elizabeth of Hungary; this too, no doubt, passed from hand to hand.[1]

An example of Luther's accustomed outspokenness was witnessed by some of those who happened to be present on the arrival of a Christmas gift of wine in 1538. The cask came from the Margrave of Brandenburg and, to the intense disappointment of the recipient, contained Franconian wine. Luther, in spite of the importance of the gift, made no secret of his annoyance, and his complaints would appear to have duly reached the ear of the Margrave. In order to efface the bad impression made at Court, Luther was obliged to send a letter of excuse to Sebastian Heller, the Chancellor. Therein he says he had been quite unaware of the excellence of Franconian wine, and, "like the big fool" he was, had not known that the inhabitants of Franconia were so fortunate in their wine as now, after tasting it, he had ascertained to be the case. In future he was going to stick to Franconian wine; to the Prince he sent his best thanks and trusted he would take nothing amiss.[2]—From the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, after he had forwarded him his memorandum regarding his bigamy, he received a hogshead of Rhine wine.[3] In the same year he received from the Town Council of Wittenberg a present of a gallon of Franconian "and four quarts of Gutterbogk wine" on the occasion of the marriage of his niece, mentioned above.

From the magistrates, in addition to other presents, came frequent gifts of liquor for himself and his guests, of which we find the entries since 1519 recorded in the Town-registers.

Only recently has attention been drawn to this.[4]

In 1525 we find the following items: "7 Gulden for six cans of Franconian wine at 14 Groschen the quart presented

[1] S. Keil, "Des seligen Zeugen Gottes Dr. M. Luthers merkwürdige Lebensumstände," 3, Leipzig, 1764, p. 156 f. He considers that the latter statements in the text were "inventions"; at any rate "there was no harm in the matter itself," and the "conclusion of the Papists that Luther was a drunkard" were therefore false. Köstlin-Kawerau 2, p. 510. On the famous but almost legendary "Luther-beakers," F Küchenmeister has an article with interesting sketches in the "Ill. Zeitung," 1879, November 1.

[2] Letter of May 12, 1532, "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 359: "*Fateor culpam meam et conscius mihi sum, effudisse me verba,*" etc.

[3] Cp. "Briefwechsel des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen," ed. Lenz 1, pp. 326, 336, 362 f., 389.

[4] "Evangelisch-kirchl. Anzeiger," Berlin, 1904, p. 70 f.

*Doctori Martino* on his engagement; 136 Gulden, 6 Groschen for a barrel of Einbeck beer presented *Doctori Martino* for his wedding; 440 Gulden *Doctori Martino* for wine and beer presented by the Council and the town on the occasion of his nuptials and wedding. Fine of 120 Gulden paid by Clara, wedded wife of Lorenz Eberhard dwelling at Jessen for abusive language concerning Doctor Martin and his honourable wife, and also for abusing the Pastor's [Bugenhagen] wife at Master Lubeck's wedding; 136 Gulden, 2 Groschen for wine sent for during the year by Doctor Martin from the town vaults and paid for by the Council." In addition to the various "presents" made by the Council, we meet repeatedly in other years with items recording deliveries of beer or wine which Luther had sent for from the town cellar. These are entered as "owing. . . . The Council loath to sue him for them. . . ." And again, "allowed to Doctor Martin this year. . . ."

This explains the low items for liquor in Luther's own list of household expenses, which were frequently quoted in proof of his exceptional abstemiousness. As a matter of fact, they are so small simply owing to the presents and to his requisitions on the town cellars, for much of which he never paid. "Four pfennigs daily for drink" we read in his household accounts in a Gotha MS., the date of which is uncertain.[1] Seeing that at Wittenberg a can of beer cost 3 pfennigs, this would allow him very little. According to another entry Katey required 56 pfennigs weekly for making the beer; the date of this is equally uncertain. It is to the filial devotion of Protestant researchers that we owe this information.[2]

Luther was in a particularly cheerful mood when he wrote, on March 18, 1535, the letter, already quoted (p. 296 f.), to his friend Caspar Müller, the Mansfeld Chancellor at Eisleben. The letter is to some extent a humorous one, but is it really a fact that in the last of the three signatures appended he qualifies himself as "*Doctor plenus*"?[3] According to some controversialists such is the case.

It is true that Denifle says of this signature, now preserved with the letter in the Vatican Library,[4] "that the badly

[1] "Farrago," etc., cod. chart. Goth., 402, Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 681, n. 498.
[2] "Evangelisch-kirchl. Anzeiger," *ibid.*
[3] "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 137. [4] Cod. Ottobon., n. 3029.

written and scarcely legible word . . . either reads or might be read as '*plenus*.'"[1] According to R. Reitzenstein, on the other hand, who also studied them, the characters cannot possibly be read thus. E. Thiele, who mentions this, suggests[2] that perhaps we might read it as "Doctor Hans," and that the signature in question might refer to Luther's little son who was with him and whose greetings with those of the mother Luther sends at the end of the letter to Müller, who was the child's godfather.

First comes the legible signature "*Doctor Martinus*" in Luther's handwriting; below this, also quite legible, stands "*Doctor Luther*," possibly denoting his wife, as Thiele very reasonably conjectures; finally we have the questionable "*Doctor plenus*." To read "Hans" instead of "*plenus*," is, according to Denifle, "quite out of the question," as I also found when I came to examine the facsimile published by G. Evers in 1883.[3] On the other hand, to judge by the facsimile, it appeared to me that "*Johannes*" might possibly be the true reading, and the Latin form also seemed to agree with that of the previous signatures. When I was able to examine the original in Rome in May, 1907, I convinced myself that, as a matter of fact, the badly formed and intertwined characters could be read as "*Johannes*"; this reading was also confirmed by Alfredo Monaci, the palæologist.[4] Hence the reading "*Doctor plenus*," too confidently introduced by Evers and repeated by Enders, though with a query, in his edition of Luther's letters, may safely be consigned to oblivion. Even

[1] "Luther in rationalistischer und christl. Beleuchtung," p. 77, n. 3.

[2] "Christl. Welt," 1904, No. 6, p. 128.

[3] "Martin Luther," 1, Beilage. Cp. *ibid.*, p. v. Evers was the first to read "*Doctor plenus*."

[4] W. Walther ("Theol. Literaturblatt," 1906, p. 473), on the strength of a photograph, now declares "*Johannes*" to be "the most likely" reading, and rightly excludes "*plenus*" on p. 586 of his book, "Für Luther." H. Böhmer ("Luther,"[2], p. 116) is also in favour of "*Johannes*." G. Kawerau for his part thought, judging from the photograph, that "*plures*" might be read instead of "*plenus*," in which N. Müller agrees with him; he could not, however, understand what "*plures*" meant here. "Studien und Kritiken," 1908, p. 603. On re-examination of the original I was forced to decide against "*plures*." K. Löffler ("Hist. Jahrb.," 30, 1909, p. 317) proposes "*Doctor parvus*," but this is excluded by the characters, though the sense would be reasonable enough. "*Johannes*" may quite well be the reading, since from 1527 Luther was in the habit of adding greetings from Katey and Hans in his letters.

had it been correct, it would merely have afforded a fresh example of Luther's jokes at his own expense, and would not necessarily have proved that his mirth was due to spirituous influence.

In one letter of Luther's, which speaks of the time he passed in the Castle of Coburg, we hear more of the disagreeable than of the cheering effects of wine.

"I have brought on headache by drinking old wine in the Coburg," he complains to his friend Wenceslaus Link, "and this our Wittenberg beer has not yet cured. I work little and am forced to be idle against my will because my head must have a rest."[1] In the Electoral accounts 25 Eimer of wine are set down for the period of Luther's stay at the Coburg;[2] seeing that he and two companions spent only 173 days there, our Protestant friends have hastened to allege "the frequent visits he received" in the Coburg.[3] It is true that he had a good many visitors during the latter part of his stay. However this may be, the illness showed itself as early as May, 1530. His own diagnosis here is no less unsatisfactory than the accounts concerning the other maladies from which he suffered. No doubt the malady was chiefly nervous.

In October of that same year, Luther protested that he had been "very abstemious in all things"[4] at the Coburg, and Veit Dietrich, his assistant at that time, wrote in the same sense on July 4: "I carefully observed that he did not transgress any of the rules of diet."[5] His indisposition showed itself in unbearable noises in the head, at times accompanied by extreme sensitiveness to light.[6] Luther was convinced that the trouble was due to the qualities of the strong wines provided for him at the castle—or, possibly, to the devil. "We are very well off," he says in June, 1530, "and live finely, but for almost a month past I have been plagued not only with noises but with actual thundering

[1] To Link at Nuremberg, January 15, 1531, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 345.

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 649, n. 195.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] To Hans Honold at Augsburg, October 2, 1530, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 196 ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 275).

[5] To Agricola. Letter published by Kawerau in the "Zeitschr. für kirchl. Wissenschaft und kirchl. Leben," 1880, p. 50. Cp. F. Küchenmeister, "Luthers Krankengesch.," 1881, p. 67 ff.

[6] Cp. Kawerau, "Etwas vom kranken Luther" (see above, p. 299, n. 1), p. 308 ff.

in my head, due, perhaps, to the wine, perhaps to the malice of Satan."[1] Veit Dietrich inclined strongly to the latter view. He tells us of the apparition of a "flaming fiery serpent" under which form the devil had manifested himself to Luther during his solitude in the Coburg: "On the following day he was plagued with troublesome noises in his head; thus the greater part of what he suffered was the work of the devil."[2] Luther himself complained in August of a fresh indisposition, this time scarcely due to nerves, which, according to him, was the result either of wine, or of the devil. "I am troubled with a sore throat, such as I never had before; possibly the strong wine has increased the inflammation, or perhaps it is a buffet of Satan [2 Cor. xii. 7]."[3] Four days later he wrote again: "My head still buzzes and my throat is worse than ever."[4] In the following month some improvement showed itself, and even before this he had days free from suffering; still, after quitting the Coburg, he still complained of incessant headache caused, as he thought, by the "old wine." When all is said, however, it does seem that later controversialists were wrong in so confidently attributing his illness in the Coburg merely to excessive love of the bottle.

Luther often vaunted the wholesome effects of beer. In a letter to Katey dated February 1, 1546, he extols the aperient qualities of Naumburg beer.[5] In another to Jonas, dated May 15, 1542, he speaks of the good that beer had done in relieving his sufferings from stone; beer was to be preferred to wine; much benefit was also to be derived from a strict diet.[6]

All these traits from Luther's private life, taken as a whole, may be considered to confirm the opinion expressed above, p. 311 f., regarding the charges which may stand against him and those of which he is to be acquitted.

[1] To Gabriel Zwilling at Torgau, June 19, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 11.
[2] In the letter quoted above.
[3] To Melanchthon, August 24, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 204 f.
[4] To Justus Jonas, August 28, 1530, *ibid.*, p. 237.
[5] Letters, ed. De Wette, 5, p. 784.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 470.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### LUTHER AND MELANCHTHON

### 1. Melanchthon in the Service of Lutheranism, 1518–30

When Melanchthon was called upon to represent Lutheranism officially at the Diet of Augsburg, while the real head of the innovation remained in the seclusion of the Coburg (vol. ii., p. 384), he had already been in the closest spiritual relation with Luther for twelve years.

The talented young man who had given promise of the highest achievements in the domain of humanism, and who had taken up his residence at Wittenberg with the intention of devoting his academic career more particularly to the Greek classics, soon fell under Luther's influence. Luther not only loved and admired him, but was, all along, determined to exploit, in the interests of his new theology, the rare gifts of a friend and colleague thirteen years his junior. Melanchthon not only taught the classics, but, after a while, announced a series of lectures on the Epistle to Titus. It was due to Luther that he thus gave himself up more to divinity and eventually cultivated it side by side with humanism. "With all his might" Luther "drove him to study theology."[1] Melanchthon's "*Loci communes*" or elements of theology, a scholastically conceived work on the main doctrines of Lutheranism, was one of the results of Luther's efforts to profit by the excellent gifts of the colleague—who he was convinced had been sent him by Providence—in formulating his theology and in demolishing the olden doctrine of the Church. The "*Loci*" proved to be a work of fundamental importance for Luther's cause.[2]

The character of the "*Loci*," at once methodic and

[1] G. Kawerau, "Luthers Stellung zu den Zeitgenossen Erasmus, Zwingli und Melanchthon" (reprinted from "Deutsch-evangel. Blätter," 1906, Hft. 1–3), p. 31.

[2] "Loci Communes Phil. Melanchthons in ihrer Urgestalt nach G. L. Plitt," ed. (with commentaries) Th. Kolde, 3rd ed., 1900.

positive, indicated the lines on which Melanchthon as a theologian was afterwards to proceed. He invented nothing, his aim being rather to clothe Luther's ideas in clear, comprehensive and scholastic language—so far as this could be done. His carefully chosen wording, together with his natural dislike for exaggeration or unnecessary harshness of expression, helped him in many instances so to tone down what was offensive in Luther's doctrines and opinions as to render them, in their humanistic dress, quite acceptable to many scholars. As a matter of fact, however, all his polish and graceful rhetoric often merely served to conceal the lack of ideas, or the contradictions. The great name he had won for himself in the field of humanism by his numerous publications, which vied with those of Reuchlin and Erasmus—his friends called him "*praeceptor Germaniae*"—went to enhance the importance of his theological works amongst those who either sided with Luther or were wavering.

### *Earlier Relations of Luther with Melanchthon.*

As professor, Melanchthon had at the outset an audience of from five to six hundred, and, later, his hearers numbered as many as 1500. He was perfectly aware that this was due to the renown which the University of Wittenberg had acquired through Luther, and the success of their common enterprise bound him still more closely to the ecclesiastical innovation. To the very end of his life he laboured in the interests of Lutheranism in the lecture-hall, at religious disputations, by his printed works, his memoranda, and his letters, by gaining new friends and by acting as intermediary when dissension threatened.—In his translation of the Bible Luther found a most willing and helpful adviser in this expert linguist. It is worthy of note that he never took the degree of Doctor of Divinity or showed the slightest desire to be made equal to his colleagues in this respect. Unlike the rest of his Wittenberg associates, he had not been an ecclesiastic previous to leaving Catholicism, nor would he ever consent to undertake the task of preacher in the Lutheran Church, or to receive Lutheran Orders, though for some years he, on Sundays, was wont to expound in Latin the Gospels to the students; these homilies resulted in his Postils. When Luther at last, in 1520,

persuaded him to marry the daughter of the Burgomaster of Wittenberg, he thereby succeeded in chaining to the scene of his own labours this valuable and industrious little man with all his vast treasures of learning. At the end of the year Melanchthon, under the pseudonym of Didymus Faventinus, composed his first defence of Luther, in which he, the Humanist, entirely vindicated against Aristotle and the Universities his attacks upon the rights of natural reason.[1]

As early as December 14, 1518, Luther, under the charm of his friend's talents, had spoken of him in a letter to Johann Reuchlin as a "wonderful man in whom almost everything is supernatural."[2] On September 17, 1523, he said to his friend Theobald Billicanus of Nördlingen: "I value Philip as I do myself, not to speak of the fact that he shames, nay, excels me by his learning and the integrity of his life ('*eruditione et integritate vitae*')."[3] Five years later Luther penned the following testimony in his favour in the Preface at the commencement of Melanchthon's Exposition of the Epistle to the Colossians (1528–29): "He proceeds [in his writings] quietly and politely, digs and plants, sows and waters, according to the gifts which God has given him in rich measure"; he himself, on the other hand, was "very stormy and pugnacious" in his works, but he was "the rough hewer, who has to cut out the track and prepare the way."[4] In the Preface to the edition of his own Latin works in 1545 he praises Melanchthon's "*Loci*" and classes them amongst the "methodic books" of which every theologian and bishop would do well to make use; "how much the Lord has effected by means of this instrument which He has sent me, not merely in worldly learning but also in theology, is demonstrated by his works."[5]

The extravagant praise accorded by Luther to his fellow-worker was returned by the other in equal measure. When deprived of Luther's company during the latter's involuntary stay at the Wartburg, he wrote as follows to a friend:

[1] "Corp. ref.," 1, pp. 286–358, more particularly 343. Cp. F. Paulsen, "Gesch. des gelehrten Unterrichts," $1^2$, 1896, p. 186 f. Further particulars of the work will be found amongst the statements concerning Luther's relations with the schools (vol. v., xxxv. 3).

[2] "Briefwechsel," 1, p. 322.

[3] *Ibid.* 4, p. 230.

[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 68; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 493.

[5] "Opp. lat. var.," 1, pp. 15, 18.

" The torch of Israel was lighted by him, and should it be extinguished what hope would remain to us ? . . . Ah, could I but purchase by my death the life of him who is at this time the most divine being upon earth ! "[1] A little later he says in the same style : " Our Elias has left us ; we wait and hope in him. My longing for him torments me daily."[2] Luther was not unwilling to figure as Elias and wrote to his friend that he (Melanchthon) excelled him in the Evangel, and should he himself perish, would succeed him as an Eliseus with twice the spirit of Elias.

We cannot explain these strange mutual encomiums merely by the love of exaggeration usual with the Humanists. Luther as a rule did not pander to the taste of the Humanists, and as for Melanchthon, he really entertained the utmost respect and devotion for the " venerable father " and " most estimable doctor " until, at last, difference of opinion and character brought about a certain unmistakable coolness between the two men.

Melanchthon, albeit with great moderation and reserve, never quitted the reformer's standpoint as regards either theory or practice. Many Catholic contemporaries were even of opinion that he did more harm to the Church by his prudence and apparent moderation than Luther by all his storming. His soft-spoken manner and advocacy of peace did not, however, hinder him from voicing with the utmost bitterness his hatred of everything Catholic, and his white-hot prejudice in favour of the innovations. He wrote, for instance, at the end of 1525 in an official memorandum (" *de iure reformandi* ") intended for the evangelical Princes and Estates that, even should " war and scandal " ensue, still they must not desist from the introduction and maintenance of the new religious system, for our cause " touches the honour of Christ," and the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone in particular, so he says, " will not suffer the contrary." Why heed the complaints of the Catholics and the Empire ? Christ witnessed " the destruction of the Kingdom of the Jews " and yet proceeded with His work. According to this memorandum there was no need of waiting for the Pope's permission to " reform " things ; the people are everywhere " bound to accept the doctrine [of

[1] To Spalatin, " Corp. ref.," 1, p. 417.

[2] Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 448 and 451, where he again calls Luther Elias in letters written in 1521 to Spalatin.

Luther] " while evangelical Princes and authorities are " not bound to obey the edicts [of the Empire] ; hence, in fairness, they cannot be scolded as schismatics."[1] For such a ruthless invitation to overturn the old-established order Melanchthon sought to reassure himself and others by alleging the " horrible abuses " of Popery which it had become necessary to remove ; the war was to be only against superstition and idolatry, the tyranny of the ecclesiastical system challenging resistance.[2]

Then and ever afterwards the Pope appeared to him in the light of Antichrist, with whom no reconciliation was possible unless indeed he yielded to Luther.

In the same year in which he wrote the above his correspondence begins to betray the anxiety and apprehension which afterwards never ceased to torture him, due partly to what he witnessed of the results of the innovations, partly to his own natural timidity. The Peasant War of 1525 plunged him into dismay. There he saw to what lengths the abuse of evangelical freedom could lead, once the passions of the people were let loose. At the express wish of the Elector Ludwig of the Palatinate he wrote in vigorous and implacable language a refutation of the Peasant Articles ; the pen of the scholar was, however, powerless to stay the movement which was carrying away the people.

A work of much greater importance fell to him when he was invited to take part in the Visitation of the churches in the Saxon Electorate, then in a state of utter chaos ; it was then that he wrote, in 1527, the Visitation-booklet for the use of the ecclesiastical inspectors.

In the directions he therein gave for the examination of pastors and preachers he modified to such an extent the asperities of the Lutheran principles that he was accused of reacting in the direction of Catholicism, particularly by the stress he laid on the motive of fear of God's punishments, on greater earnestness in penance and on the keeping of the " law." Luther's preaching of the glad Evangel had dazzled people and made them forgetful of the " law " and Commandments. According to Melanchthon this was in great part the fault of the Lutheran preachers.

[1] " Corp. ref.," 1, p. 763. To the Elector of Saxony.
[2] *Ibid.*

"In their addresses to the people," he complains in 1526, "they barely mention the fear of God. Yet this, and not faith alone, is what they ought to teach. . . . On the other hand, they are all the more zealous in belabouring the Pope." Besides this they are given to fighting with each other in the pulpit; the authorities ought to see that only the "more reasonable are allowed to preach and that the others hold their tongues, according to Paul's injunction."[1] "They blame our opponents," he writes of these same preachers in 1528, "for merely serving their bellies by their preaching, but they themselves appear only to work for their own glory, so greatly do they allow themselves to be carried away by anger."[2]

"The depravity of the country population" he declares in a letter of the same year to be intolerable; it must necessarily call down the heavy hand of God's chastisement. "The deepest hatred of the Gospel" was, however, to be found "in those who play the part of our patrons and protectors." Here he is referring to certain powerful ones; he also laments "the great indifference of the Court." All this shows the end to be approaching: "Believe me, the Day of Judgment is not far distant." "When I contemplate the conditions of our age, I am troubled beyond belief."[3]

Regarding his recommendation of penance and confession during the Visitations, a conversation which he relates to Camerarius as having taken place at the table of a highly placed patron of the innovations, is very characteristic. A distinguished guest having complained of this recommendation, the patron chimed in with the remark, that the people must "hold tight to the freedom they had secured, otherwise they would again be reduced to servitude by the theologians"; the latter were little by little re-introducing the old traditions. Thus you see, Melanchthon adds, "how, not only our enemies, but even those who are supposed to be favourably bent, judge of us."[4] Yet Melanchthon had merely required a general sort of confession as a voluntary preparation for Holy Communion.

Melanchthon was also openly in favour of the penalty of excommunication; in order to keep a watch on the preachers he introduced the system of Superintendents.

In the matter of marriage contracts his experience led him to the following conclusion: "It is clearly expedient that the marriage bond should be tightened rather than loosened"; in this the older Church had been in the right. "You know," he writes, "what blame ('*quantum sceleris*') our party has incurred by its wrong treatment of marriage matters. All the preachers

[1] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 821, memorandum for the Landgrave of Hesse.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 995. To Balth. During, about September, 1528.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 981. To Fr. Myconius, June 5, 1528: "*Ego sic angor, ut nihil supra vel cogitari possit, quum considero horum temporum conditionem.*" Similar statements of Melanchthon's in Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 366 ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 938. Letter of September 13, 1528.

everywhere ought to exert themselves to put an end to these scandals. But many do nothing but publicly calumniate the monks and the authorities in their discourses." And yet in the same letter he sanctions the re-marriage of a party divorced for some unknown reason, a sanction he had hitherto been unwilling to grant for fear of the example being followed by others; he only stipulates that his sanction is not to be announced publicly; the sermons must, on the contrary, censure the license which is becoming the fashion.[1]

Any open and vigorous opposition to Luther's views, so detrimental to the inviolability of the marriage tie, was not in accordance with Melanchthon's nature. He, like Luther, condemned the religious vows on the strange ground that those who took them were desirous of gaining merit in the sight of God. Hence he too came to invite nuns to marry.[2] And yet, at the same time, he, like Luther, again declared virginity to be a "higher gift," one which even ranked above marriage ("*virginitas donum est praestantius coniugio*").[3]

He was gradually drawn more and more into questions concerning the public position of the Lutherans and had to undertake various journeys on this account, because Luther, being under the Ban, was unable to leave the Electorate, and because his violent temper did not suit him for delicate negotiations. Melanchthon erred rather on the side of timidity.

When, in 1528, in consequence of the Pack business, there seemed a danger of war breaking out on account of religion, he became the prey of great anxiety. He feared for the good name and for the evangelical cause should bloody dissensions arise in the Empire through the fault of the Princes who favoured Luther. On May 18 he wrote to the Elector Johann on no account to commence war on behalf of the Evangel, especially as the Emperor had made proposals of peace. "I must take into consideration, for instance, what a disgrace it would be to the Holy Gospel were your Electoral Highness to commence war without first having tried every means for securing peace."[4] There

[1] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 1013. To Myconius, December 1, 1528: "*Meum scriptum ostendas consulibus ut permittant nubere mulierculæ.*"

[2] Cp. *ibid.*, p. 839. "*Iudicium*" of 1526.

[3] "Apologia confess. August.," art. 23. "Symbolische Bücher," ed. Müller-Kolde, p. 242.

[4] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 979. Cp. "Luthers Briefwechsel," 6, p. 274.

can be no doubt that the terrible experience of the Peasant War made him cautious, but we must not forget, that such considerations did not hinder him from declaring frequently later, particularly previous to the Schmalkalden War, that armed resistance was allowable, nay, called for, nor even from going so far as to address the people in language every whit as warlike as that of Luther.[1] In the case of the hubbub arising out of the famous forged documents connected with the name of Pack, Luther, however, seemed to him to be going much too far. "Duke George could prove with a clear conscience that it was a question of a mere forgery and of a barefaced deception,"[2] got up to the detriment of the Catholic party. On Luther's persisting in his affirmation that a league existed for the destruction of the Evangelicals, and that the "enemies of the Evangel" really cherished "this evil intention and will,"[3] Duke George did, as a matter of fact, take him severely to task in a work to which Luther at once replied in another teeming with unseemly abuse.[4]

Melanchthon, like the rest of Luther's friends who shared his opinion, saw their hopes of peace destroyed. They read with lively disapproval Luther's charges against the Duke, who was described as a thief, as one "eaten up by Moabitish pride and arrogance," who played the fool in thus raging against Christ; as one possessed of the devil, who in spite of all his denials meditated the worst against the Lutherans, who allowed himself to be served in his Chancery by a gang of donkeys and who, like all his friends, was devil-ridden. Concerning the impression created, Melanchthon wrote to Myconius that Luther had indeed tried to exercise greater restraint than usual, but that "he ought to have defended himself more becomingly. All of us who have read his pages stand aghast; unfortunately such writings are popular, they pass from hand to hand and are studied, being much thought of by fools (' *praedicantur a stultis* ')."[5]

[1] See below, xx. 4, his Preface to his new edition of Luther's "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen."

[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 113 f. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] "Von heimlichē und gestolen Brieffen" ("Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 2, p. 1 ff.; Erl. ed., 31, p. 1 ff.). The appended exposition of Psalm vii. probably told greatly on many, more particularly on pious readers.

[5] On January 9, 1529, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 1023. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 115.

It was only with difficulty that he and his Wittenberg friends dissuaded Luther from again rushing into the fray.

In 1529 Melanchthon, at Luther's desire, accompanied the Elector of Saxony to the Diet of Spires. The protest there made by the Lutheran Princes and Estates again caused him great concern as he foresaw the unhappy consequences to Germany of the rupture it betokened, and the danger in which it involved the Protestant cause. The interference of the Zwinglians in German affairs also filled him with apprehension, for of their doctrines, so far as they were opposed to those of Wittenberg, he cherished a deep dislike imbibed from Luther. The political alliance which, at Spires, the Landgrave of Hesse sought to promote between the two parties, appeared to him highly dangerous from the religious point of view. He now regretted that he had formerly allowed himself to be more favourably disposed to Zwinglianism by the Landgrave. In his letters he was quite open in the expression of his annoyance at the results of the Diet of Spires, though he himself had there done his best to increase the falling away from Catholicism, and, with words of peace on his lips, to render the estrangement irremediable. In his first allusion to the now famous protest he speaks of it as a "horrid thing."[1] His misgivings increased after his return home, and he looked forward to the future with anxiety. He was pressing in his monitions against any alliance with the Zwinglians. On May 17, 1529, he wrote to Hieronymus Baumgärtner, a member of the Nuremberg Council: "Some of us do not scorn an alliance with the [Zwinglian] Strasburgers, but do you do your utmost to prevent so shameful a thing."[2] "The pains of hell have encompassed me," so he describes to a friend his anxieties. We have delayed too long, "I would rather die than see ours defiled by an alliance with the Zwinglians."[3] "I know that the Zwinglian doctrine of the Sacrament of

[1] To his friend Camerarius from Spires, April 21, 1529, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 1060, "*Habes rem horribilem.*"

[2] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 1070.

[3] To Justus Jonas, June 14, 1529, p. 1076; "*Una res nocuit nobis, quam diutius procrastinati sumus, cum postularetur a nobis, ut damnaremus Zinglianos. Hinc ego in tantam incidi perturbationem, ut mortem oppetere malim, quam has miserias ferre. Omnes dolores interni* (read *inferni*) *oppresserunt me. Sed tamen spero Christum remedia his rebus ostensurum esse.*"

the Body and Blood of Christ is untrue and not to be answered for before God."[1]

After he had assisted Luther in the religious discussion held at Marburg between him and Zwingli in the autumn of 1529, and had witnessed the fruitless termination of the conference, he again voiced his intense grief at the discord rampant among the innovators, and the hopelessness of any effort to reunite Christians. "I am quite unable to mitigate the pains I suffer on account of the position of ecclesiastical affairs," so he complains to Camerarius. "Not a day passes that I do not long for death. But enough of this, for I do not dare to describe in this letter the actual state of things."[2]

Luther was much less down-hearted at that time, having just succeeded in overcoming a persistent attack of anxiety and remorse of conscience. His character, so vastly different from that of his friend, now, after the victory he had won over his "temptations," was more than ever inclined to violence and defiance. Luther, such at least is his own account, refused to entertain any fear concerning the success of his cause, which was God's, in spite of the storm threatening at Augsburg.

### *Melanchthon at the Diet of Augsburg*, 1530.

At Augsburg the most difficult task imaginable was assigned to Melanchthon, as the principal theological representative of Lutheranism. His attitude at the Diet was far from frank and logical.

He made his own position quite puzzling by his vain endeavour to unite things incapable of being united, and to win, by actual or apparent concessions, temporary toleration for the new religious party within the Christian Church to which the Empire belonged. Owing to his lack of theological perspicuity he does not appear to have seen as clearly as Luther how hopeless was the rupture between old and new. He still had hopes that the Catholics would gradually come over to the Wittenberg standpoint when once an agreement had been reached regarding certain outward and subordinate matters, as he thought them. "Real unifica-

[1] To Philip of Hesse, June 22, 1529, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 1078. Cp. p. 1075 *seq.*

[2] On November 14, 1529.

tion," as Johannes Janssen says very truly, " was altogether out of the question." For the point at issue in this tremendous ecclesiastical contest was not this or that religious dogma, this or that addition or alteration in Church discipline ; it was not even a question merely of episcopal jurisdiction and the sense in which this was understood and allowed by Protestant theologians ; what was fundamentally at stake was no less than the acceptance or rejection of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church, and the recognition or non-recognition of the Church as a Divine and human institution of grace, resting upon the perpetual sacrifice and priesthood. The Protestants rejected the dogma of the infallibility of the Church and set up for themselves a novel ecclesiastical system, they also rejected the perpetual sacrifice in that they denied the doctrine of the perpetual priesthood. . . . Hence the attempts at reconciliation made at Augsburg, as indeed all later attempts, were bound to come to nothing."[1]

In the " Confession of Augsburg," where the author shows himself a past-master in the art of presentation, Melanchthon presents the Lutheran doctrine under the form most acceptable to the opposite party, calculated, too, to prove its connection with the teaching of the Roman Church as vouched for by the Fathers. He passes over in silence certain capital elements of Lutheran dogma, for instance, man's unfreedom in the performance of moral acts pleasing to God, likewise predestination to hell,[2] and even the rejection on principle of the Papal Primacy, the denial of Indulgences and of Purgatory. A Catholic stamp was impressed on the doctrine of the Eucharist so as to impart to it the semblance of the doctrine of Transubstantiation ; even in the doctrine of justification, any clear distinction between the new teaching of the justifying power of faith alone and the Catholic doctrine of faith working by love (" *fides formata charitate* ") is wanting. Where, in the second part, he deals with certain traditions and abuses which he holds to have been the real cause of the schism, he persists in minimising the hindrances to mutual agreement, or at least to toleration of the new religious party. According to this statement, all that Protestants actually

[1] " Hist. of the German People " (Eng. Trans.), 5, p. 262 f.
[2] See Luther's own doctrine, vol. ii., pp. 223 ff., 265 ff., 291 ff.

demanded was permission to receive communion under both kinds, the marriage of priests, the abolition of private masses, obligatory confession, fasts, religious vows, etc. The bishops, who were also secular princes, were to retain their jurisdiction as is expressely stated at the end, though they were to see that the true Gospel was preached in their dioceses, and not to interfere with the removal of abuses.[1]

In the specious and seductive explanation of the "Confession," errors which had never been advocated by the Church were refuted, while propositions were propounded at great length which had never been questioned by her, in both cases the aim being to win over the reader to the author's side and to divert his attention from the actual subject of the controversy.

Luther, to whom the work was submitted when almost complete, allowed it to pass practically without amendment. He saw in it Melanchthon's "soft-spoken manner," but nevertheless gave it his assent.[2]

He was quite willing to leave the matter in the hands of such trusty and willing friends as Melanchthon and his theological assistants at Augsburg, and to rely on the prudence and strength of the Princes and Estates of the new profession there assembled. Secure in the "Gospel-proviso" the Coburg hermit was confident of not being a loser even in the event of the negotiations not issuing favourably. Christ was not to be deposed from His throne; to "Belial" He at least could not succumb.[3]

The "Confession of Augsburg" was not at all intended in the first instance as a symbolic book, but rather as a deed presented to the Empire on the part of the protesting Princes and Estates to demonstrate their innocence and vindicate their right to claim toleration. During the years that followed it was likewise regarded as a mere Profession

[1] Cp. Kolde in J. J. Müller, "Symbolische Bücher" [10], Introduction, p. ix.: "There was no mention therein of the Papal power and it was left to the 'pleasure of His Imperial Majesty, should he see any reason, to attack the Papacy'"—thus the Strasburg envoys in 1537 in Kolde, "Anal. Lutherana," p. 297; for, as Melanchthon openly admitted to Luther, the Articles must be accommodated to the needs of the moment.

[2] Kolde, *ibid.* ("Symbol. Bücher"), p. viii. f. Luther to the Elector of Saxony, May 15, 1530, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 145 ("Briefwechsel," 7, p. 335): "I see nothing I can improve upon or alter, nor would this be fitting seeing that I am unable to proceed so softly and quietly."

[3] On the "Gospel-proviso," our vol. ii., p. 385 ff.

on the part of the Princes, i.e. as a theological declaration standing on the same level as the Schmalkalden agreement, and forming the bond of the protesting Princes in the presence of the Empire; each one was still free to amplify, explain, or modify the faith within his own territories. Finally, however, after the religious settlement at Augsburg in 1555, Melanchthon's work began to be regarded as a binding creed, and this character was to all practical purposes stamped on it by the "Concord" in 1580.[1]

On August 3, 1530, a "Confutation of the Confession of Augsburg," composed by Catholic theologians, was read before the Estates at the Diet of Augsburg. The Emperor called upon the Protestants to return to the Church, threatening, in case of refusal, that he, as the "Guardian and Protector" of Christendom, would institute proceedings. Yet in spite of this he preferred to follow a milder course of action and to seek a settlement by means of lengthy "transactions."

The "Reply" to the Confession (later known as "*Confutatio Confessionis Augustanæ*"), which was the result of the deliberations of a Catholic commission, set forth excellent grounds for rejecting the errors contained in Melanchthon's work, and also threw a clear light on his reservations and intentional ambiguities.[2] Melanchthon's

[1] Cp. Kolde, *ibid.*, p. xxiv. ff. K. Müller, "Die Symbole des Luthertums" ("Preuss. Jahrb.," 63, 1889, p. 121 ff.), points out why Luther looked askance at any Symbolic Books; the fact is he did not recognise any Church having "a legal and ordered constitution and laws such as would call for Symbolic Books." G. Krüger says ("Philipp Melanchthon," 1906, p. 18 f.): "The Confession and its Apology were wrongly interpreted by the narrow-minded orthodoxy of later years as laws binding on faith. And yet why did Melanchthon go on improving and polishing them if he did not regard them as his own personal books, which he was free to alter just as every author may when he publishes a new edition of his work?" Yet they were "the genuine charter of evangelical belief as understood by our Reformers."

[2] Cp. J. Ficker, "Die Konfutation des Augsburger Bekenntnisses," Gotha and Leipzig, 1891, where the "*Confutatio*" is reprinted in its original form (p. 1 ff.). Adolf Harnack says ("Lehrb. der Dogmengesch.," 3⁴, 1910, p. 670, n. 3): "The duplicity of the '*Augustana*' has become still more apparent in Ficker's fine book on the '*Confutatio*.' The confuters were unfortunately right in many of the passages they adduced in proof of the lack of openness apparent in the Confession. In the summer of 1530 Luther was not so well satisfied with the book as he had been in May, and he too practically admitted the objections on the score of dissimulation made by the Catholics." Harnack quotes in support of "the dissimulation" the passage at the end of Article xxi. ("Symb.

answer was embodied in his "*Apologia Confessionis Augustanæ*," which well displays its author's ability and also his slipperiness, and later took its place, side by side with the Confession, as the second official exposition of Lutheranism. It energetically vindicates Luther's distinctive doctrines, and above all declares, again quite falsely, that the doctrine of justificatory faith was the old, traditional Catholic doctrine. Nor does it refrain from strong and insulting language, particularly in the official German version. The opposite party it describes as shameless liars, rascals, blasphemers, hypocrites, rude asses, hopeless, senseless sophists, traitors, etc.[1] This, together with the "*Confessio Augustana*," was formally subscribed at the Schmalkalden meeting in 1537 by all the theologians present at the instance of the Evangelical Estates. Thus

Bücher" [10], p. 47): "*Hæc fere summa est doctrinæ apud nos* [Harnack: *suos*] *in qua cerni potest nihil inesse, quod discrepet a scripturis vel ab ecclesia catholica vel ab ecclesia romana, quatenus ex scriptoribus nota est.*" On p. 684 Harnack says concerning the Confession of Augsburg: "That the gospel of the Reformation has found masterly expression in the *Augustana* I cannot admit. The *Augustana* was the foundation of a doctrinal Church; to it was really due the narrowing of the Reformation movement, and, besides, it was not entirely sincere. . . . Its statements, both positive and negative, are intentionally incomplete in many important passages; its diplomatic readiness to meet the older Church is painful, and the way in which it uses the sectarians [Zwinglians] as a whipping-boy and deals out 'anathemas' is not only uncharitable but unjust, and dictated not merely by spiritual zeal but by worldly prudence." Still he finds "jewels in the earthen vessel"; "but, as regards the author, we may say without hesitation that Melanchthon in this instance undertook—was forced to undertake—a task for which his talents and his character did not fit him."

As regards the position of the *Augustana* in the history of Protestantism, Harnack remarks on the same page, that the free teaching of the Reformation then began to develop into a "Rule of Faith." "When to this was added the pressure from without, and when, under the storms which were gathering (fanatics, Anabaptists), courage to say anything *quod discrepet ab ecclesia catholica vel ab ecclesia romana, quatenus ex scriptoribus nota est*, faded away, then the movement terminated in the Confession of Augsburg, which while not actually denying the principle of evangelical freedom, nevertheless begins to pour the new wine into old vessels (cp. even the Articles of Marburg). Did the Reformation (of the sixteenth century) do away with the old dogma? It is safer to answer this question in the negative than in the affirmative But if we admit that it attacked its foundations, as our Catholic opponents rightly accuse us of doing, and that it was a mighty principle rather than a new system of doctrine, then it must also be admitted that the altogether conservative attitude of the Reformation towards ancient dogma, inclusive of its premisses, for instance, Original Sin and the Fall, belongs, not to its principle, but simply to its history."

[1] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 280 ff., with a more detailed appreciation of the *Apologia*.

it came to rank with the Confession of the Princes and, like the former, was incorporated later, in both the Latin and the oldest German version, in the symbolic books.[1]

Melanchthon, in the "*Apologia*," re-stated anew the charges already raised in the "*Confessio*" against Catholic dogma, nor did the proofs and assurances to the contrary of the authors of the "*Confutatio*" deter him from again foisting on the Catholic Church doctrines she had never taught. Thus he speaks of her as teaching, that the forgiveness of sins could be merited simply by man's own works (without the grace and the merits of Christ); he also will have it that the effect of grace had formerly been altogether lost sight of until it was at last brought again to light—though as a matter of fact "it had been taught throughout the whole world."[2]

We must come back in detail to the allegations made in the Confession, and more particularly in the Apology, that Augustine was in favour of the Lutheran doctrine of Justification; this is all the more necessary since the Reformers, at the outset, were fond of claiming the authority of Augustine on their behalf. At the same time the admissions contained in Melanchthon's letters will show us more clearly the morality of his behaviour in a matter of such capital importance.

At the time when the Confession was printed it had already long been clear to him that the principal exponent of the doctrine of grace in the ancient Church, viz. St. Augustine, was against the Protestant conception of justification.

On this subject he expressed himself openly at the end of May, 1531, in a confidential letter to Brenz. Here he speaks of the doctrine of Augustine as "a fancy from which we must turn aside our mind ('*animus revocandus ab Augustini imaginatione*')"; his ideas disagreed with St. Paul's doctrine; whoever followed Augustine must teach like him, "that we are regarded as just by God, through fulfilling the commandments under the action of the Holy Ghost, and not through faith alone."[3]

In spite of this, Melanchthon, in the "*Confessio Augustana*," had the courage to appeal publicly to Augustine as the most prominent and clearest witness to the Lutheran view of faith and justification, and this he did almost at the very time when penning the above letter, viz. in April or May, 1531, when the

[1] Reprinted in the "Symb. Bücher," p. 73 ff. Cp. Kolde's Introduction, p. xl. f.

[2] Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 281.

[3] "Briefwechsel Luthers," 9, p. 18 ff. "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 501.

first draft of the "*Confessio*" was sent to the press.[1] According to the authentic version, Melanchthon's words were: "That, concerning the doctrine of faith, no new interpretation had been introduced, could be proved from Augustine, who treats diligently of this matter and teaches that we obtain grace and are justified before God by faith in Christ and not by works, as his whole book '*De Spiritu et littera*' proves."[2]

The writer of these words felt it necessary to explain to Brenz why he had ventured to claim this Father as being in "entire agreement." He had done so because this was "the general opinion concerning him ('*propter publicam de eo persuasionem*'),[3] though, as a matter of fact, he did not sufficiently expound the justificatory potency of faith." The "general opinion" was, however, merely a groundless view invented by Luther and his theologians and accepted by a certain number of those who blindly followed him. In the Apology of the Confession, he continues, "I expounded more fully the doctrine [of faith alone], but was not able to speak there as I do now to you, although, on the whole, I say the same thing; it was not to be thought of on account of the calumnies of our opponents." Thus in the Apology also, even when it was a question of the cardinal point of the new teaching, Melanchthon was of set purpose having recourse to dissimulation. If he had only to fear the calumnies of opponents, surely his best plan would have been to silence them by telling them in all frankness what the Lutheran position really was; otherwise he had no right to stigmatise their attack on weak points of Luther's doctrine as mere calumnies. Yet, even in the "*Apologia*," he appeals repeatedly to Augustine in order to shelter the main Lutheran contentions concerning faith, grace, and good works under the ægis of his name.[4]

Melanchthon's endeavour to secure for Protestantism a place within the older Church and to check the threatened repressive measures, led him to write letters to the Bishop of Augsburg, to Campeggio, the Papal Legate, and to his

[1] Kolde, *ibid.*, p. xxi., on the Latin edition which appeared at the end of April or the beginning of May, being followed by the German edition (probably) in the autumn.

[2] "Symb. Bücher," p. 45. The Latin text runs: "*Tota hæc causa habet testimonia patrum. Nam Augustinus multis voluminibus defendit gratiam et iustitiam fidei contra merita operum. Et similia docet Ambrosius. . . . Quamquam autem haec doctrina (iustificationis) contemnitur ab imperitis, tamen experiuntur piæ ac pavidæ conscientiæ plurimam eam consolationis afferre.*"

[3] In the letter to Brenz mentioned above.

[4] Cp. the passages, "Symb. Bücher," pp. 92, 104, 151, 218. On p. 104 in the article *De iustificatione* he quotes Augustine, *De spir. et litt.*, in support of Luther's interpretation of Paul's doctrine of Justification. On p. 218 he foists this assertion on the Catholics, "*homines sine Spiritu Sancto posse . . . mereri gratiam et iustificationem operibus*," and says, that this was refuted by Augustine, "*cuius sententiam supra in articulo de iustificatione recitavimus.*"

secretary, in which he declares stoutly, that the restoration of ecclesiastical harmony simply depended on two points, viz. the sanction of communion under both kinds and the marriage of the clergy, as though forsooth the two sides agreed in belief and as though his whole party acknowledged the Pope and the Roman Church.

In the letter to Cardinal Campeggio he even assures him: "We reverence the authority of the Pope of Rome and the whole hierarchy, and only beg he may not cast us off. . . . For no other reason are we hated as we are in Germany than because we defend and uphold the dogmas of the Roman Church with so much persistence. And this loyalty to Christ and to the Roman Church we shall preserve to our last breath, even should the Church refuse to receive us back into favour." The words "Roman Church" were not here taken in the ordinary sense, however much the connection might seem to warrant this; Melanchthon really means his pet phantom of the ancient Roman Church, though he saw fit to speak of fidelity to this phantom in the very words in which people were wont to protest their fidelity to the existing Roman Church. He further asked of the Cardinal toleration for the Protestant peculiarities, on the ground that they were "insignificant matters which might be allowed or passed over in silence"; at any rate "some pretext might easily be found for tolerating them, at least until a Council should be summoned."[1]

Campeggio and his advisers refused to be led astray by such assurances.

On the other hand, some representatives of the Curia, theologians or dignitaries of the German Church, allowed themselves to be cajoled by Melanchthon's promises to the extent of entering into negotiations with him in the hope of bringing him back to the Church.[2] Such was, for instance, in 1537, the position of Cardinal Sadolet.

To Sadolet, Johann Fabri sent the following warning: "Only the man who is clever enough to cure an incurable malady, will succeed in leading Philip—a real Vertumnus and Proteus—back to the right path."[3]

[1] "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 173; cp. p. 169.

[2] G. Kawerau, "Die Versuche Melanchthon zur kath. Kirche zurückzuführen," 1902 ("Schriften des Vereins für RG.," xix. 3.

[3] On January 28, 1538. Kawerau, *ibid.*, p. 44. Cp. G. Ellinger, "Philipp Melanchthon," Berlin, 1902, pp. 362 ff., 598.

Melanchthon was nevertheless pleased to be able to announce that Cardinal Campeggio had stated he could grant a dispensation for Communion under both kinds and priestly marriage.[1]

With this Luther was not much impressed: "I reply," he wrote to his friends in the words of Amsdorf, "that I s—— on the dispensation of the Legate and his master; *we* can find dispensations enough."[2] His own contention always was and remained the following: "As I have always declared, I am ready to concede everything, but they must let us have the Evangel."[3] To Spalatin, he says later: "Are we to crave of Legate and Pope what they may be willing to grant us? Do, I beg you, speak to them in the fashion of Amsdorf."[4]

On the abyss which really separated the followers of the new faith from the Church, Luther's coarse and violent writing, "Vermanũg an die Geistlichen zu Augsburg," throws a lurid light. Luther also frequently wrote to cheer Melanchthon and to remind him of the firmness which was needed.

Melanchthon was a prey to unspeakable inward terrors, and had admitted to Luther that he was "worn out with wretched cares."[5] Luther felt called upon to encourage him by instancing his own case. He was even more subject to such fits of anxiety than Melanchthon, but, however weak inwardly, he never winced before outward troubles or ever manifested his friend's timidity. Melanchthon ought to display the same strength in public dealings as he did in his inward trials.[6]

[1] To Veit Dietrich, July 8, 1530, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 174.

[2] To Jonas, Spalatin, Melanchthon and Agricola at Augsburg, July 15, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 113.

[3] To Melanchthon, June 29, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 45.

[4] On August 28, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 233. "*Obsecro te, ut Amsdorfice respondeas in aliquem angulum*: 'Dass uns der Papst und Legat wollten im Ars lecken.'"

[5] From Luther's letter to Melanchthon of June 27, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 35; "*tuas miserrimas curas, quibus te scribis consumi.*" This was really due to the "greatness of our want of faith."

[6] He writes to Melanchthon on June 30, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 51: "*Si nos ruemus, ruet Christus una! Esto ruat, malo ego cum Christo ruere quam cum Cæsare stare.*" His cause was without "*temeritas*" and quite pure, "*quod testatur mihi Spiritus ipse.*' *Ibid.*: "*Ego pro te oro, oravi et orabo nec dubito, quin sim exauditus; sentio illud Amen in corde meo.*" The entire letter mirrors his frame of mind during his stay at the Castle of Coburg.

The Landgrave Philip, a zealous supporter of Luther and Zwingli, was not a little incensed at Melanchthon's attempts at conciliation, the more so as the latter persisted in refusing to have anything to do with Zwinglianism. In one of his dispatches to his emissaries at Augsburg, Philip says: "For mercy's sake stop the little game of Philip, that shy and worldly-wise reasoner—to call him nothing else."[1] The Nuremberg delegates also remonstrated with him. Baumgärtner of Nuremberg, who was present at the Diet of Augsburg, relates that Philip flew into a temper over the negotiations and startled everybody by his cursing and swearing; he was determined to have the whole say himself and would not listen to the Hessian envoys and those of the cities. He "did nothing" but run about and indulge in unchristian manœuvres"; he put forward "unchristian proposals" which it was "quite impossible" to accept; "then he would say, 'Oh, would that we were away!'" The result would be, that, owing to this duplicity, the "tyrants would only be all the more severe"; "no one at the Reichstag had hitherto done the cause of the Evangel so much harm as Philip"; it was high time for Luther "to interfere with Philip and warn pious Princes against him."[2]

Amongst the Protestant so-called "Concessions" which came under discussion in connection with the "*Confutatio*" was that of episcopal jurisdiction, a point on which Melanchthon and Brenz laid great stress. It was, however, of such a nature as not to offend in the least the protesting Princes and towns. In the event of their sanctioning the innovations, the bishops were simply "to retain their secular authority": Melanchthon and Brenz, here again, wished to maintain the semblance of continuity with the older Church, and, by means of the episcopate, hoped to strengthen their own position. Such temporising, and the delay it involved, at least served the purpose of gaining time, a matter of the utmost importance to the Protestant representatives.[3]

Another point allowed by Melanchthon, viz. the omission

[1] Ellinger, "Melanchthon," p. 280.

[2] To Spengler, September 15, 1530, "Corp. ref.," 2. p. 372.

[3] In his "*spes transactionis*" ("Corp. ref.," 2, p. 261) Melanchthon even described the previous tampering with the Church as "*temerarii motus*" (*ibid.*, p. 246 *seq.*). Kawerau, in Möller, "Lehrb. der KG.," $3^3$, p. 112.

of the word "alone" in the statement "man is justified by faith," was also of slight importance, for all depended on the sense attached to it, and the party certainly continued to exclude works and charity. Melanchthon, however, also agreed that it should be taught that penance has three essential elements, viz. contrition, confession of sin and satisfaction, i.e. active works of penance, "a concession." Döllinger says, "which, if meant seriously, would have thrown the whole new doctrine of justification into confusion."[1] It may be that Melanchthon, amidst his manifold worries, failed to perceive this.

At any rate, all his efforts after a settlement were ruled by the "Proviso of the Gospel"[2] as propounded by Luther to his friends in his letters from the Coburg. According to this tacit reservation no concession which in any way militated against the truth or the interests of the Evangel could be regarded as valid. "Once we have evaded coercion and obtained peace," so runs Luther's famous admonition to Melanchthon, "then it will be an easy matter to amend our wiles and slips because God's mercy watches over us."[3] "All our concessions," Melanchthon wrote, "are so much hampered with exceptions that I apprehend the bishops will suspect we are offering them chaff instead of grain."[4]

A letter, intended to be reassuring, written from Augsburg on September 11 by Brenz, who was somewhat more communicative than Melanchthon, and addressed to his friend Isenmann, who was anxious concerning the concessions being offered, may serve further to elucidate the policy of Melanchthon and Brenz. Brenz writes: "If you consider the matter carefully you will see that our proposals are such as to make us appear to have yielded to a certain extent; whereas, in substance, we have made no concessions whatsoever. This they plainly understand. What, may I ask, are the Popish fasts so long as we hold the doctrine of freedom?" The real object of the last concession, he had already pointed out, was to avoid giving the Emperor and his Court the impression that they were "preachers of sensuality." The jurisdiction conceded to the bishops will not harm us so long as they "agree to our *Via media* and conditions"; they

[1] "Die Reformation," 3, p. 297.

[2] Luther to Melanchthon, June 29, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 45: "*Sicuti semper scripsi, omnia sis concedere paratus, tantum solo evangelio nobis libere permisso.*"

[3] August 28, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 235: "*dolos ac lapsus nostros facile emendabimus*," etc. Cp. our vol. ii., p. 386. For proof that "*mendacia*" should be read after "*dolos*" see Grisar, "Stimmen aus M.L.," 1913, p. 286 ff.

[4] To Camerarius, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 334.

themselves will then become new men, thanks to the Evangel; "for always and everywhere we insist upon the proviso of freedom and purity of doctrine. Having this, what reason would you have to grumble at the jurisdiction of the bishops?"[1] It will, on the contrary, be of use to us, and will serve as a buffer against the wilfulness of secular dignitaries, who oppress our churches with heavy burdens. "Besides, it is not to be feared that our opponents will agree to the terms." The main point is, so Melanchthon's confidential fellow-labourer concludes, that only thus can we hope to secure "toleration for our doctrine."[2]

When Melanchthon penned this confession only a few days had elapsed since Luther, in response to anxious letters received from Augsburg, had intervened with a firm hand and spoken out plainly against the concessions, and any further attempts at a diplomatic settlement.[3]

In obedience to these directions Melanchthon began to withdraw more and more from the position he had taken up. The most favourable proposals of his opponents were no longer entertained by him, and he even refused to fall in with the Emperor's suggestion that Catholics living in Protestant territories should be left free to practise their religion. The Elector of Saxony's divines, together with Melanchthon, in a memorandum to their sovereign, declared, on this occasion, that it was not sufficient for preachers to preach against the Mass, but that the Princes also must refuse to sanction it, and must forbid it. "Were we to say that Princes might abstain from forbidding it, and that preachers only were to declaim against it, one could well foresee what [small] effect the doctrine and denunciations of the preachers would have."[4] "The theologians," remarks Janssen, "thus gave it distinctly to be understood that the new doctrine could not endure without the aid of the secular authority."[5] Hence, at that

[1] "*Ubique enim et semper excipimus libertatem et puritatem doctrinæ, qua obtenta tunc dominationem episcoporum detrectares?*"

[2] "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 362.

[3] Cp. Luther's letter to Melanchthon, August 26, 1530, and previous ones to Melanchthon, July 13; to Jonas, Spalatin, Melanchthon and Agricola, July 15; to Melanchthon, July 27. "Briefwechsel," 8, pp. 219, 100, 112, 136.

[4] "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 307.

[5] "Hist. of the German People" (Engl. Trans.), 5, p. 282. Spoken at the termination of the historic Diet of Augsburg the words of the theologians gain added interest, though this was not the first time similar language was heard. Cp. G. Krüger, "Phil. Melanchthon, eine Charakterskizze," p. 14 f. Even in 1527 the Visitations had been

decisive moment, the Protestant Princes proclaimed intolerance of Catholics as much a matter of conscience as the confiscation of Church property. To the demand of the Emperor for restitution of the temporalities, the Princes, supported by the theologians, answered, that "they did not consider themselves bound to obey, since this matter concerned their conscience, against which there ran no prescription" (on the part of those who had been despoiled).[1]

Thus, with Melanchthon's knowledge and approval, the two principal factors in the whole Reformation, viz. intolerance and robbery of Church property, played their part even here at the turning-point of German history.

On his return from the Coburg to Wittenberg, as already described (p. 45 f.), Luther in his sermons showed how the Evangel which he proclaimed had to be preached, even at the expense of war and universal desolation: "The cry now is, that, had the Evangel not been preached, things would never have fallen out thus, but everything would have remained calm and peaceful. No, my friend, but things will improve; Christ speaks: 'I have more things to say to you and to judge'; the fact is you must leave this preaching undisturbed, else there shall not remain to you one stick nor one stone upon another, and you may say: 'These words are not mine, but the words of the Father.'" (cp. John viii. 26).[2]

Yet, at the time of the Diet of Augsburg, Luther, for all his inexorable determination, was not unmindful of the temporal assistance promised by the Princes. He hinted at this with entire absence of reserve in a letter, not indeed to Melanchthon, who was averse to war, but to Spalatin: "Whatever the issue [of the Diet] may be, do not fear the victors and their craft. Luther is still at large and so is the Macedonian" (i.e. Philip of Hesse, whom Melanchthon had thus nicknamed after the warlike Philip of Macedonia). The "Macedonian" seemed to Luther a sort of "Ismael," like unto Agar's son, whom Holy Scripture had described as a wild man, whose hand is raised against all (Gen. xvi. 12). Luther was aware that Philip had quitted the

"arranged by the Elector for the amendment of the conditions" which Luther had exposed "to his sovereign with a heavy heart, viz. 'how the parsonages are in a state of misery, no one giving or paying anything'; the common man heeds neither preacher nor parson, so that, unless some strong measures are taken by Your Electoral Highness for State maintenance of pastors and preachers, there will soon be neither parsonages, nor schools, nor scholars, and so God's Word and service will come to an end."

[1] Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 282: "neither were they at all impressed by the declaration of the Emperor that 'the Word of God, the Gospel and every law, civil and canonical, forbade a man to appropriate to himself the property of another.'"

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 48, p. 342.

Diet in anger and was now nursing his fury, as it were, in the desert. "He is at large," he says in biblical language, "and thence may arise prudence to meet cunning and Ismael to oppose the enemy. Be strong and act like men. There was nothing to fear if they fought with blunted weapons."[1] Philip's offer of a refuge in Hesse had helped to render Luther more defiant.[2]

Exhortations such as these increased the unwillingness of his friends at Augsburg to reach any settlement by way of real concessions. All hopes of a peaceful outcome of the negotiations were thus doomed.

The Reichstagsabschied which finally, on November 19, 1530, brought Parliament to an end, witnessed to the hopelessness of any lasting peace; it required, however, that the bishoprics, monasteries, and churches which had been destroyed should be re-erected, and that the parishes still faithful to Catholicism should enjoy immunity under pain of the ban of the Empire.[3]

Looking back at Melanchthon's attitude at the Diet, we can understand the severe strictures of recent historians.

"We cannot get rid of the fact," writes Georg Ellinger, Melanchthon's latest Protestant biographer, "that, on the whole, his attitude at the Diet of Augsburg does not make a pleasing impression." "That the apprehension of seeing the realisation of his principles frustrated led him to actions which can in no wise be approved, may be freely admitted." It is true that Ellinger emphasises very strongly the "mitigating circumstances," but he also remarks: "He had no real comprehension of the importance of the ecclesiastical forms involved [in his concessions], and this same lack of penetration served him badly even later. The method by which he attempted to put his plans into execution displays nothing of greatness but rather that petty slyness which seeks to overreach opponents by the use of ambiguous words. . . . He had recourse to this means in the hope of thus arriving more easily at his goal." His "little tricks," he proceeds, "at least delayed the business for a while," to the manifest advantage of the Protestant cause.[4] He candidly admits that Melanchthon, both before and after the Diet of Augsburg, owing to his weak and not entirely upright character, was repeatedly caught "having recourse to the subterfuges of a slyness not far removed from dissimulation."[5] In proof of this he instances the expedient

[1] Letter of August 28, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 233.

[2] Luther to the Landgrave, September 11, 1530, "Werke," Erl. ed., 56, p. xxvii. ("Briefwechsel," 8, p. 253): "I heartily thank H.R.H. for his gracious and consoling offer to afford me shelter."

[3] Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 319 ff.

[4] "Ph. Melanchthon," 1902, pp. 283 f., 286, 287.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 596.

invented by Melanchthon for the purpose of evading the conference with Zwingli at Marburg which was so distasteful to him. "The Elector was to behave as though Melanchthon had, in a letter, requested permission to attend such a conference, and had been refused it. Melanchthon would then allege this to the Landgrave of Hesse [who was urging him to attend the conference] 'in order that His Highness may be pacified by so excellent an excuse.'"[1] Ellinger, most impartially, also adduces other devices to which Melanchthon had recourse at a later date.[2]

The conduct of the leader of the Protestant party at the Diet of Augsburg, more particularly his concern in the document addressed to the Legate Campeggio, is stigmatised as follows by Karl Sell, the Protestant historian. "This tone, this sudden reduction of the whole world-stirring struggle to a mere wrangle about trifles, and this recognition, anything but religious, of the Roman Church, comes perilously near conscious deception. Did Melanchthon really believe it possible to outwit diplomats so astute by such a blind? In my opinion it is unfair to reproach him with treason or even servility; what he was guilty of was merely duplicity." Campeggio, Sell continues, of these and similar advances made by the Protestant spokesmen, wrote: "They answer as heretics are wont, viz. in cunning and ambiguous words."[3]

Even in the "Theologische Realenzyklopädie des Protestantismus" a suppressed note of disapproval of Melanchthon's "mistakes and weaknesses" is sounded. His attitude at the Diet, the authors of the article on Melanchthon say, "was not so pleasing as his learned labours on the Augsburg Confession"; "a clear insight into the actual differences" as well as a "dignified and firm attitude" was lacking; "this applies particularly to his letter to the Papal Legate."[4]

We can understand how Döllinger, in his work "Die Reformation," after referring to Melanchthon's palpable self-contradictions, speaks of his solemn appeal to the doctrine of St. Augustine as an intentional and barefaced piece of deception, an untruth "which he deemed himself allowed." Döllinger, without mincing matters, speaks of his "dishonesty," and relentlessly brands his misleading statements; they leave us to choose between two alternatives, either he was endeavouring to deceive and trick the Catholics, or he had surrendered the most important and distinctive Protestant doctrines, and was ready to lend a hand in re-establishing the Catholic teaching.[5]

[1] "Ph. Melanchthon," 1902, p. 251. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

[3] "Ph. Melanchthon und die deutsche Reformation bis 1531" ("Schriften des Vereins für RG.," xiv. 3), p. 90 f. Campeggio, in H. Laemmer, "Monumenta Vaticana," p. 51.

[4] Third ed. Art. "Melanchthon," by († Landerer, † Herrlinger and) Kirn, pp. 518, 529.

[5] "Die Reformation," 1, p. 358 ff. The page-heading reads: "Melanchthons absichtliche und öffentliche Unwahrheit."

Luther, so far as we are aware, never blamed his friend, either publicly or in his private letters, for his behaviour during this crisis, nor did he ever accuse him of "treason to the Evangelical cause."[1] He only expresses now and then his dissatisfaction at the useless protraction of the proceedings and scolds him jokingly "for his fears, timidity, cares and lamentations."[2] No real blame is contained in the words he addressed to Melanchthon: "So long as the Papacy subsists among us, our doctrine cannot subsist. . . . Thank God that you are having nothing from it." "I know that in treating of episcopal authority you have always insisted on the Gospel proviso, but I fear that later our opponents will say we were perfidious and fickle ('*perfidos et inconstantes*') if we do not keep to what they want. . . . In short, all these transactions on doctrine displease me, because nothing comes of them so long as the Pope does not do away with his Papacy."[3] A fortnight later Luther cordially blessed his friend, who was then overwhelmed with trouble: "I pray you, my Philip, not to crucify yourself in anxiety over the charges which are raised against you, either verbally or in writing [by some of ours who argue], that you are going too far. . . . They do not understand what is meant by the episcopal authority which was to be re-established, and do not rightly estimate the conditions which we attach to it. Would that the bishops had accepted it on these conditions! But they have too fine a nose where their own interests are concerned and refuse to walk into the trap."[4]

### *Melanchthon, the "Erasmian" Intermediary.*

A closer examination of the bent of Melanchthon's mind reveals a trait, common to many of Luther's learned followers at that time, which helps to explain his attitude at Augsburg.

The real foundations of theology were never quite clear to them because their education had been one-sidedly

[1] Sell, *ibid.*, p. 98.
[2] To Melanchthon, June 30, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 51.
[3] On August 26, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 219. Cp. his letters of July 13 to Melanchthon, of July 15 to Jonas, Spalatin and Melanchthon.
[4] On September 11, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 252: "*Utinam episcopi eam (iurisdictionem) accepissent sub istis conditionibus! Sed ipsi habent nares in suam rem.*"

Humanistic, and they had never studied theology proper. They were fond of speaking and writing of the Church, of Grace and Faith, but their ideas thereon were strangely subjective, so much so that they did not even agree amongst themselves. Hence, in their dealings with Catholic theologians the latter often failed to understand them. The fruitlessness of the conferences was frequently due solely to this ; though greatly prejudiced in Luther's favour, they still considered it possible for the chasm between the old and the new to be bridged over, and longed earnestly for such a consummation to be secured by some yielding on the Catholic side ; they were unwilling to break away from the Church Universal, and, besides, they looked askance at the moral consequences of the innovations and feared still greater confusion and civil war.

That this was the spirit which animated Melanchthon is evident from some of the facts already recorded.

He had nothing more at heart than to secure the atmosphere essential for his studies and for the furtherance of intellectual, particularly Humanistic, culture, and to smooth the way for its general introduction into Germany. His knowledge of theology had been acquired, as it were, incidentally through his intercourse with Luther and his study of Scripture ; the latter, however, had been influenced by his Humanism and, speaking generally, he contented himself in selecting in the Bible certain general moral truths which might serve as a rule of life. He indeed studied the Fathers more diligently than Luther, the Greek Fathers proving particularly attractive to him ; it was, however, chiefly a study of form, of culture, and of history, and as regards theology little more than mere dilettantism. His insight into the practical life of the Church left much to be desired, otherwise the Anabaptist movement at Zwickau would not have puzzled him as it did and left him in doubt as to whether it came from God or the devil. His ignorance of the gigantic intellectual labours of the Middle Ages in the domain of theology made itself felt sensibly. He knew even less of Scholasticism than did Luther, yet, after having acquired a nodding acquaintance with it in its most debased form, he, as a good pupil of Erasmus, proceeded to condemn it root and branch. Every page of his writings proves that his method of thought and expression, with its

indecision, its groping, its dependence on echoes from the classics, was far removed from the masterpieces of learning and culture of the best days of the Middle Ages. Yet he fancies himself entitled to censure Scholasticism and to write in Luther's style with a conceit only matched by his ignorance: "You see what thick darkness envelops the commentaries of the ancients and the whole doctrine of our opponents, how utterly ignorant they are of what sin really is, of the purpose of the law, of the blessings of the Gospel, of prayer, and of man's refuge when assailed by mental terrors."[1] The "mental terrors," referred to here and elsewhere, belonged to Luther's world of thought. This touch of mysticism, the only one to be found occasionally in Melanchthon's works, scarcely availed to render his theology any the more profound.[2]

Hence, in fairness, his attempts at mediation when at the Diet of Augsburg may be regarded as largely due to ignorance and to his prejudice against Catholic theology.

We must, however, also take into consideration the Humanist phantom of union and peace for the benefit of the commonweal and particularly of scholarship; likewise his frequently expressed aversion for public disorder, and his fears of a decline of morals and of worse things to come. Then only shall we be in a position to understand the attitude of the man upon whose shoulders the burden of the matter so largely rested. The trait chiefly to be held accountable for his behaviour, viz. his peculiar, one-sided Humanistic education, was well described by Luther later on when Melanchthon was attacked by Cordatus and Schenk for his tendency to water down dogma. Luther

[1] To Camerarius, November 2, 1540, "Corp, ref.," 3, p. 1126.

[2] Cp. his "*Apologia*" of the Augsburg Confession, Art. iv., "Symb. Bücher," p. 87, where, on the doctrine of Justification, the old German translation runs: "Because the gainsayers know not nor understand what the words of Scripture mean, what forgiveness of sins, or grace, or faith, or justice is . . . they have miserably robbed poor souls, to whom it was a matter of life and death, of their eternal consolation." Page 90: "They do not know what the fear of death or the assaults of the devil are . . . when the heart feels the anger of God or the conscience is troubled . . . but the affrighted conscience knows well that it is impossible to merit either *de condigno* or *de congruo*, and therefore soon sinks into distrust and despair," etc. Page 95: The new teaching alone was able "to raise up our hearts even amidst the terrors of sin and death," etc. Hence Melanchthon insists in his "*Brevis discendæ theologiæ ratio*" ("Corp. ref.," 2, p. 458), that Bible study served "*ad usum et ad tentationes superandas comparanda cognitio.*"

then spoke of the "Erasmian intermediaries" at whose rough handling he was not in the least surprised.

### 2. Disagreements and Accord between Luther and Melanchthon

Luther had good reason for valuing highly the theological services which Melanchthon rendered him by placing his ideas before the world in a form at once clearer and more dignified. Points of theology and practice which he supplied to his friend as raw material, Melanchthon returned duly worked-up and polished. Luther's views assumed practical shape in passing through Melanchthon's hands.[1]

At the outset the latter readily accepted all the doctrines of his "*præceptor observandissimus.*" In the first edition of the "*Loci*" (December, 1521) he made his own even Luther's harshest views, those, namely, concerning man's unfreedom and God's being the author of evil.[2] The faithful picture of his doctrine which Luther there found so delighted him, that he ventured to put the "*Loci*" on a level with the canon of Holy Scripture (vol. ii., p. 239).

#### *Disagreements.*

As years passed by, Melanchthon allowed himself to deviate more and more from Luther's teaching. The latter's way of carrying every theological thesis to its furthest limit, affrighted him. He yearned for greater freedom of action, was desirous of granting a reasonable amount of room to doubt, and was not averse to learning a thing or two even from opponents. It was his Humanistic training which taught him to put on the brake and even to introduce several far-reaching amendments into Luther's theories. It was his Humanism which made him value the human powers and the perfectibility of the soul, and thus to doubt whether Luther was really in the right in his denial of freedom. Such a doubt we find faintly expressed by him soon after he had perused the "*Diatribe*" published by Erasmus in 1524.[3] Luther's reply ("*De servo arbitrio*"), to which

[1] See Kawerau, "Luthers Stellung," etc. (above p. 319, n. 1), p. 32. Cp. Kawerau, "Studien und Kritiken," 1897, p. 678 f.

[2] Plitt-Kolde, [3], 1900.

[3] Melanchthon to Spalatin, September, 1524, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 674, after the publication of the "*Diatribe*": "*Diu optavi Luthero pru-*

Melanchthon officially accorded his praise, failed to convince him of man's lack of freedom in the natural order. In 1526, in his lectures on Colossians (printed in 1528), he openly rejected the view that God was the author of sin, stood up for freedom in all matters of civil justice, and declared that in such things it was quite possible to avoid gross sin.[1] In his new edition of the "*Loci*" in 1527 he abandoned determinism and the denial of free-will, and likewise the severer form of the doctrine of predestination,[2] such as he had still championed in the 1525 edition, but which, he had now come to see, was at variance with the proper estimate of man and human action.

Neither could Melanchthon ever bring himself to speak of human reason, as compared to faith, in quite the same language of disrespect as Luther.

That, on the occasion of the Visitation, he began to lay stress on works as well as faith, has already been pointed out.[3] In this connection it is curious to note how, with his usual caution and prudence where Luther and his more ardent followers were concerned, he recommends that works should be represented as praiseworthy only when penance was being preached, but not, for instance, when Justification was the subject, as, here, Lutherans, being accustomed to hear so much of the "*sola fides*," might well take offence.[4]

In the matter of Justification, he, like Luther, made everything to rest on that entirely outward covering over of man by Christ's merits received through faith, or

*dentem aliquem de hoc negotio antagonistam contingere.*" "His own testimony (in 1536) is decisive as to the effect of Erasmus on his opinion regarding free-will." Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 199. On the "*Diatribe*," see our vol. ii., p. 261 ff.

[1] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 202. In this he was of course inconsequent, for, as Ellinger says, where it is a question of the religious life, he traces everything back to the action of God. "It is easy to see, that, here, as in Luther's case (where the *Deus absconditus* plays a part), we have merely an expedient." *Ibid.*

[2] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 175 f.

[3] Above, p. 324. He was being attacked on account of the stress he laid on good works, so he wrote to Camerarius in December, 1536, but though so many preachers were now shouting in stentorian tones that it was erroneous to demand works, "posterity will be astonished that an age so mad could ever have been, when such folly met with applause." Cp. "*Pezelii Obiectiones et resp. Melanchthonis*," 5, p. 289, in Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 373.

[4] To Veit Dietrich, June 22, 1537, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 383.

rather through confidence of salvation.[1] Indeed, Luther's greatest service, according to him, lay in his having made this discovery. It was necessary, so he taught, that Christian perfection should be made to consist solely in one's readiness, whenever oppressed by the sense of guilt, to find consolation by wrapping oneself up in the righteousness of Christ. Then the heart is "fearless, though our conscience and the law continue to cry within us that we are unworthy." In other words, we must "take it as certain that we have a God Who is gracious to us for Christ's sake, be our works what they may."[2]

It was his advocacy of this doctrine, as the very foundation of sanctification, which earned for him the striking commendation we find in a letter written by Luther to Jonas in 1529. Melanchthon had been of greater service to the Church and the cause of holiness than "a thousand fellows of the ilk of Jerome, Hilarion or Macarius, those Saints of ceremonies and celibacy who were not worthy to loose the laces of his boots nor—to boast a little—of yours [Jonas's], of Pomeranus [Bugenhagen], or even of mine. For what have these self-constituted Saints and all the wifeless bishops done which can compare with one year's work of Philip's, or with his '*Loci*'?"[3]

Yet this very work was to bear additional testimony to Melanchthon's abandonment of several of Luther's fundamental doctrines.[4]

In 1530 and 1531 Melanchthon passed through a crisis, and from that time forward a greater divergency in matters of doctrine became apparent between the two friends. Even in his work for the Diet in 1530 Melanchthon had assumed a position of greater independence, and this grew more marked when he began to plan a revised edition of his "*Loci*." He himself was later to acknowledge that his

[1] To the Landgrave of Hesse in 1524, under the title "*Epitome renovatæ ecclesiasticæ doctrinæ*" ("Corp. ref.," 1, p. 704): "*Iustitia vere christiana est, cum confusa conscientia per fidem in Christum erigitur et sentit, se accipere remissionem peccatorum propter Christum.*" In the same "*Epitome*," p. 706: "*Ipsissimam iustitiam esse, credere quod per Christum remittantur peccata sine nostra satisfactione, sine nostris meritis.*"

[2] Cp. the passages in Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 291.

[3] Letter of August or September, 1529, "Briefwechsel," 7, p. 158.

[4] Even in his "*Discendæ theologiæ ratio*" of 1530 ("Corp. ref.," 2, p. 457), Melanchthon had said: "*Multa sunt in illis* (*Locis*) *adhuc rudiora, quæ decrevi mutare.*"

views had undergone a change, though, in order to avoid unpleasantness, he preferred to make out that the alteration was less far-reaching than it really was. "You know," he wrote to an ardent admirer of Luther's, "that I put certain things concerning predestination, determination of the will, necessity of obedience to the law, and grievous sin, less harshly than does Luther. In all these things, as I well know, Luther's teaching is the same as mine, but there are some unlearned persons, who, without at all understanding them, pin their faith on certain rude expressions of his."[1] But was Luther's teaching really "the same"? The truth is, that, on the points instanced, "Luther had not only in earlier days taught a doctrine different from that of Melanchthon, but continued to cherish the same to the very end of his life."[2] It fitted, however, the cowardly character of Melanchthon to conceal as much as possible these divergencies.

It is worth our while to examine a little more closely the nature of the doctrinal differences between Luther and Melanchthon, seeing that the latter—to quote the Protestant theologian Gustav Krüger—was the real "creator of evangelical theology" and the "founder of the evangelical Church system."[3]

As a matter of fact Melanchthon had already shaped out a course of his own by the modifications which he had seen fit to introduce in the original Confession of Augsburg.

Not only did he omit whatever displeased him in the new doctrine, but he also formulated it in a way which manifestly deviated from Luther's own. Human co-operation, for instance, plays a part much greater than with Luther. Unlike Luther, he did not venture to assert plainly that the gift of faith was the work of God independent of all human co-operation. Concerning the "law," too, he put forward a different opinion, which, however, was not much better than Luther's.[4] In 1530, so says Fr. Loofs, one of the most esteemed Protestant historians of dogma, "he was no longer merely an interpreter of Luther's ideas."[5] "Yet he had not yet arrived at a finished theology of

[1] To Veit Dietrich, June 22, 1537, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 383: "*Scio, re ipsa Lutherum sentire eadem.*"

[2] Fr. Loofs, "Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengesch.," 4. 1906, p. 857. He says, that Melanchthon "was deceiving himself" in asserting that Luther's teaching was the same.

[3] "Phil. Melanchthon, eine Charakterskizze," 1906, p. 3.

[4] Loofs, *ibid.*, p. 837 f.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 838. He had even ceased to be a true interpreter since 1527, so we read on p. 842.

his own even in 1531, when he published the '*editio princeps*' of the '*Augustana*' and the '*Apologia.*'"[1] One of the first important products of the change was the Commentary on Romans which he published in 1532. Then, in 1535, appeared the revised edition of the "*Loci,*" which, in its new shape, apart from mere modifications of detail, was to serve as his measure for the last twenty-five years of his life. "The '*Loci*' of 1535 embody the distinctive Melanchthonian theology."[2]

"Thus, even before the death of Luther, and before altered circumstances had restricted Melanchthon's influence, the stamp which the latter had impressed upon the principles of the Reformation had already become the heritage of a large circle of evangelical theologians."[3]

Leaving aside the idea of an unconditional Divine predestination, he spoke in both these works of the "*promissio universalis*" of salvation. The Holy Ghost—such is his view on the question of conversion—by means of the "Word" produces faith in those who do not resist. The human will, which does not reject, but accepts grace, forms, together with the "Word of God" and the "Holy Ghost," one of the three causes ("*tres causæ concurrentes*") of conversion. It is really to Luther's deterministic doctrine that the author of the "*Loci*" alludes in the 1535 edition: "The Stoics' ravings about fate must find no place in the Church."[4]

Human co-operation in the work of salvation came to be designated Synergism. The Protestant historian of dogma mentioned above points out "that, by his adoption of Synergism, Melanchthon forsook both the Lutheran tradition and his own earlier standpoint." The assumption of an unconditional Divine predestination, such as we find it advocated by Luther, Zwingli, Bucer, Calvin and others, was here "for the first time thrown overboard by one of the Protestant leaders."[5] The same author, after commenting on Melanchthon's new exposition of justification and the law in relation to the Gospel, declares that here, too, Melanchthon had exploited "only a part of Luther's thought and had distorted some of the most precious truths we owe to the Reformation."[6]

This same charge we not seldom hear brought against Melanchthon by up-to-date Protestant theologians. In the school of Albert Ritschl it is, for instance, usual to say that he narrowed the ideas of Luther, particularly in his conception of faith and of the Church. The truth is that Melanchthon really did throw overboard certain radical views which had been cherished by Luther, particularly in his early days. The faith which is required for salvation he comes more and more to take as faith in all the articles of revelation, and not so much as a mere faith and confidence in the forgiveness of sins and personal salvation;

[1] Loofs, p. 842.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 844.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 845.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 845 ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 853 f.

" the first place is accorded no longer to trust but to doctrine,"[1] though, as will appear immediately, he did not feel quite sure of his position. In his conception of the Church, too, he was more disposed to see " an empirical reality and to insist on its doctrinal side,"[2] instead of looking on the Church, as Luther did, viz. as the " invisible band of all who confess the Gospel."[3] Johannes Haussleiter, the Protestant editor of the Disputations held under Melanchthon from 1546 onwards, thus feels justified in saying that, " it was in Melanchthon's school that the transition was effected . . . from a living confession born of faith and moulded with the assistance of theology, to a firm, hard and rigid law of doctrine. . . . This, from the point of view of history, spelt retrogression. . . . If it was possible for such a thing to occur at Wittenberg one generation after Luther's ringing testimony in favour of the freedom of a Christian Man, what might not be feared for the future ? "[4]

Carl Müller is also at pains to show that it was Melanchthon who imbued the first generation of theologians—for whose formation he, rather than Luther, was responsible—with the idea of a Church which should be the guardian of that " pure doctrine " to be enshrined in formularies of faith. According to Müller it can never be sufficiently emphasised that the common idea is all wrong, and that " to Luther himself the Church never meant a congregation united by outward bonds or represented by a hierarchy or any other legal constitution, rule or elaborate creed, but nothing more than a union founded on the Gospel and its confession " ; Luther, according to him, remained " on the whole " true to his ideal.[5] How far the words " on the whole " are correct, will be seen when we come to discuss Luther's changes of views.[6]

Melanchthon betrays a certain indecision in his answer to the weighty question : Which faith is essential for salvation ? At one time he takes this faith, according to the common Lutheran view, as trust in the mercy of God in Christ, at another, as assent to the whole revealed Word of God. Of his Disputations, which are the best witnesses we have to his attitude, the editor says aptly : " He alternates between two definitions of faith which he seems to consider of equal value, though to-day the difference between them cannot fail to strike one. He wavers, and

[1] J. Haussleiter, " Aus der Schule Melanchthons, Theologische Disputationen usw., 1546 bis 1560," Greifswald, 1897, p. 35.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[3] Cp. Loofs, *loc. cit.*, p. 855.

[4] Haussleiter, *loc. cit.*, p. v. Also Loofs, *loc. cit.* Cp. above, p. 332, n.

[5] " Die Symbole des Luthertums " (" Preuss. Jahrb.," 63, 1889), p. 121 ff.

[6] Cp. above, p. 3 ff. It should be pointed out in order to supplement the above statements of Haussleiter and Müller that Luther nevertheless looks on faith as the acceptance of certain dogmas (cp. above, p. 14, and vol. v., xxxiv. 1), and thus in some sense recognises a " rule of faith," and that not seldom in the most peremptory fashion he demands obedience to the " injunctions of faith."

yet he does so quite unconsciously."[1] The same editor also states that all attempts hitherto made to explain this phenomenon leave something to be desired. He himself makes no such attempt.

The true explanation, however, is not far to seek.

Melanchthon's vacillation was the inevitable consequence of a false doctrinal standpoint. According to the principles of Luther and Melanchthon, faith, even as a mere assurance of salvation, should of itself avail to save a man and therefore to make him a member of the Church. Thus there is no longer any ground to require a preliminary belief or obedient acceptance of the whole substance of the Word of God ; and yet some acceptance, at least implicit, of the whole substance of revelation, seems required of everyone who desires to be a Christian. This explains the efforts of both Luther and Melanchthon to discover ways and means for the reintroduction of this sort of faith. Their search was rendered the more difficult by the fact that here there was a " work " in the most real sense of the word, viz. willing, humble and cheerful acceptance of the law, and readiness to accord a firm assent to the truths revealed. The difficulty was even enhanced because in the last resort an authority is required, particularly by the unlearned, to formulate the doctrines and to point out what the true content of revelation is. In point of fact, however, every external guarantee of this sort had been discarded, at least theoretically, and no human authority could provide such an assurance. We seek in vain for a properly established authority capable of enacting with binding power what has to be believed, now that Luther and Melanchthon have rejected the idea of a visible Church and hierarchy, vicariously representing Christ. From this point of view it is easy to understand Melanchthon's efforts—illogical though they were—to erect an edifice of " pure doctrine for all time " and his fondness for a " firm, hard and rigid law of doctrine." His perplexity and wavering were only too natural. What reliable guarantee was Melanchthon in a position to offer—he who so frequently altered his teaching—that his own interpretation of Scripture exactly rendered the Divine Revelation, and thus constituted " pure doctrine " firm and unassailable ? Modern theologians, when they find fault with Melanchthon for his assumption of authority and for his alteration of Luther's teaching, have certainly some justification for their strictures.[2]

[1] Page vi.

[2] Karl Müller (" Symbole," p. 127 f.) points out very truly that Melanchthon was in the habit of appealing to Luther's authority, who, for his part, " claimed immutability for his own view of the Gospel " ; and further that later followers of Luther, for instance, Flacius, thanks to this very principle, reverted to the real Luther, and furiously assailed Melanchthon for his deformation of the Reformer. According to G. Krüger, " Melanchthon," p. 12, Melanchthon " in his revisions (of the ' *Loci* ') cut himself more and more adrift from Luther, not always happily, but rather to the detriment of the cause." Page 25 : " Many are of opinion that the glorious seed of the German Reformation

As a matter of fact, however, Luther, as we shall see below, was every whit as undecided as Melanchthon as to what was to be understood by faith. Like his friend, Luther too alternates between faith as an assurance of salvation and faith as an assent to the whole Word of God. The only difference is, that, in his earlier years, his views concerning the freedom of each individual Christian to expound the Word of God and to determine what belonged to the body of faith, were much more radical than at a later period.[1] Hence Melanchthon's fondness for a "rigid law of doctrine" was more at variance with the earlier than with the later Luther. From the later Luther he differs favourably in this; not being under the necessity of having to explain away any earlier radical views, he was better able to sum up more clearly and systematically the essentials of belief, a task, moreover, which appealed to his natural disposition. Luther's ideas on this subject are almost exclusively embodied in polemical writings written under the stress of great excitement; such statements only too frequently evince exaggerations of the worst sort, due to the passion and heat of the moment.

Of special importance was Melanchthon's opposition to Luther on one of the most practical points of the Church's life, viz. the doctrine of the Supper. At the Table which was intended to be the most sublime expression of the charity and union prevailing among the faithful, these two minds differed hopelessly.

It was useless for Luther to assure Melanchthon that the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament was so essential an article of faith that if a man did not believe in it he believed in no article whatever. From the commencement of the 'thirties Melanchthon struck out his own course and became ever more convinced, that the doctrine of the Real Presence was not vouched for by the Bible. Once he had gone so far as to tell the Zwinglians that they had "to fear the punishment of Heaven" on account of their erroneous doctrine.[2] After becoming acquainted with the "*Dialogus*" of Œcolampadius, published in 1530, he, however, veered round to a denial of the Sacrament. Yet, with his superficial

would have borne much richer fruit had Melanchthon been different from what he was." Yet Krüger also says: "Should the Luther for whom we long ever come, then let us hope that a Melanchthon will be his right-hand man, that, with the advent of the Titan who overthrows the old and founds the new, the spirit of peace and kindliness may still prevail to the blessing to our Fatherland and Church." What the aims of the new Luther and new Melanchthon are to be, the author fails to state.

[1] Above, p. 8 ff.

[2] Ellinger, *loc. cit.*, p. 69.

rationalism and his misinterpretation of certain patristic statements, Œcolampadius had really adduced no peremptory objection against the general, traditional, literal interpretation of the words of consecration to which Melanchthon, as well as Luther, had till then adhered. In view of Melanchthon's defective theological education little was needed to bring about an alteration in his views, particularly when the alteration was in the direction of a Humanistic softening of hard words, or seemed likely to provide a basis for conciliation. There was some foundation for his comparison of himself, in matters of theology, to the donkey in the Palm-Sunday mystery-play.[1]

On the question of the Sacrament, the theory of the "Sacramentarians" came more and more to seem to him the true one.

Owing, however, to his timidity and the fear in which he stood of Luther, he did not dare to speak out. The "*Loci*" of 1535 is remarkably obscure in its teaching concerning the Sacrament, whilst, in a letter to Camerarius of the same year, he speaks of Luther's view as "alien" to his own, which, however, he refuses to explain.[2] Later the Cologne scheme of 1543 in which Bucer, to Luther's great annoyance, evaded the question of the Real Presence, obtained Melanchthon's approval. When, in 1540, Melanchthon made public a new edition of the Confession of Augsburg ("*Confessio variata*"), containing alterations of greater import than those of the previous editions, the new wording of the 10th Article was "Melanchthonian" in the sense that it failed to exclude "the doctrine either of Melanchthon, or of Bucer, or of Calvin on the Supper."[3] It was "Melanchthonian" also in that elasticity and ambiguity which has since become the model for so many Protestant formularies. In order to secure a certain outward unity it became usual to avoid any explicitness which might affright such as happened to have scruples. A Melanchthonian character was thus imparted to the theology which, with Melanchthon himself as leader, was to guard the heritage of Luther.

[1] Krüger, "Ph. Melanchthon," p. 12: "Although Melanchthon, the academician, did not look upon himself as a born theologian, although he likened himself to the donkey in the mystery-play, yet he became the father of evangelical theology."

[2] To Camerarius, January 10, 1535, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 822: "*meam sententiam noli nunc requirere fui enim nuncius alienæ causæ.*"

[3] Loofs, *ibid.*, p. 865.

*Points of Accord between Melanchthon and Luther.*

Melanchthon's religious character naturally exhibits many points of contact with that of Luther.

Only to a limited extent, however, does this hold good of the "inward terrors." Attempts have been made to prove that, like Luther, his more youthful friend believed he had experienced within him the salutary working of the new doctrine of Justification.[1] But, though, in his "*Apologia*" to the Augsburg Confession and in other writings, he extols, as we have seen, this doctrine as alone capable of imparting strength and consolation in times of severe anxiety of conscience and spiritual desolation, and though he speaks of the "*certamina conscientiæ*," and of the assurance of salvation in exactly the same way that Luther does, still this is no proof of his having experienced anything of the sort himself. The statements, which might be adduced in plenty from his private letters, lag very far behind Luther's characteristic assurances of his own experience.

Of the enlightenment from on high by which he believed Luther's divine mission as well as his own work as a teacher to be the result, of prayer for their common cause and of the joy in heaven over the work, labours and persecution they had endured, he can speak in language as exalted as his master's, though not with quite the same wealth of imagination and eloquence. That the Pope is Antichrist he proves from the Prophet Daniel and other biblical passages, with the same bitter prejudice and the same painstaking exegesis as Luther. On hearing of the misshapen monster, alleged to have been found dead in the Tiber near Rome in 1496, his superstition led him to write a work overflowing with hatred against the older Church in which in all seriousness he expounded the meaning of the "Pope-Ass," and described every part of its body in detail. This work was published, together with Luther's on the Freiberg "Monk-Calf."[2] Melanchthon there says: "The feminine belly and breasts of the monster denote the Pope's body, viz. the Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, Monks, Students, and such-like lascivious folk and gluttonous swine, for their life is nothing but feeding and swilling, unchastity and luxury. . . . The fish scales on the arms, legs, and neck stand for

[1] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 1, p. 358. He gives no references.
[2] Above, p. 150 ff.

the secular princes and lords" who "cling to the Pope and his rule," etc.[1] This curious pamphlet ran through a number of editions, nor did Melanchthon ever become aware of its absurdity. As for Luther, in 1535 he wrote an Appendix, entitled "Luther's Amen to the Interpretation of the Pope-Ass," confirming his friend's reading of the portent. "Because the Divine Majesty," so we there read, "has Himself created and manifested it [the monstrosity], the whole world ought rightly to tremble and be horror-struck."[2]

In his fondness for the superstitions of astrology Melanchthon went further than Luther, who refused to believe in the influence of the planets on man's destiny, and in the horoscopes on which his companion set so much store. Both, however, were at one in their acceptance of other superstitions, notably of diabolical apparitions even of the strangest kinds.[3]

On this subject we learn much hitherto unknown from the "*Analecta*," published by G. Loesche in 1892.[4] Melanchthon, for instance, relates that a doctor at Tübingen "kept the devil in a bottle, as magicians are wont to do."[5] Amsdorf had once heard the devil grunting. Melanchthon himself had heard a tremendous noise on the roof of the cathedral at Magdeburg, which was a presage of coming warlike disturbances; the same portent had been observed at Wittenberg previous to the besieging of the town.[6] To what extent people might become tools of the devil was evident, so he told his students, from the example of two witches at Berlin, who had murdered a child in order to raise a snow-storm by means of impious rites, and who were now awaiting punishment at the hands of the authorities.[7] It was not, however, so easy to deal with witches. At Wittenberg one, while undergoing torture on the rack, had changed herself into a cat and mewed.[8] Twelve years previously a ghost had killed a fisherman on the Elster.[9] Hence it was neces-

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 11, p. 378; Erl. ed., 29, p. 5.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 29, p. 7. [3] Vol. v., xxxi. 1 and 4.
[4] "Anal. Lutherana et Melanchthoniana. Tischreden Luthers und Aussprüche Melanchthons," 1892 (usually quoted here as "Mathesius, Aufzeichnungen").
[5] Page 178. [6] Page 158. [7] Page 143. [8] Page 178.
[9] Page 186. On Melanchthon's belief in devils and witches see K. Hartfelder, "Hist. Taschenbuch," 1889, p. 252 ff. Cp. N. Paulus, "Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess vornehmlich im 16. Jahrhundert." 1910, pp. 27, 41, 121.

sary to look out for good remedies and counter-spells against witchcraft. "Where tortoises were to be met with it was held that neither poison nor magic could work any harm."[1]

According to Melanchthon the signs in the heavens must never be disregarded when studying the times. Two fiery serpents, which had recently been seen at Eisenberg engaged in a struggle in the sky, were an infallible presage of "coming war in the Church," especially as a fiery cross had shown itself above the serpents.[2] By careful calculations he had ascertained that the end of the world, the approach of which was in any case foretold by the wickedness of men, would take place before the year 1582.[3]

His friend Camerarius remarked with annoyance that "many persons had made notes of Melanchthon's private conversations and thus affixed a stigma to his name."[4] This complaint reminds us of a drollery, none too delicate, contained in the "*Analecta*" among the "*Dicta Melanchthonis*" concerning the flatulence of a monk.[5] Even the editor admits that one cannot think very highly of these sayings of Melanchthon, especially when we remember that the "*Dicta*" were uttered at lectures which the speaker seemed in the habit of enlivening with all kinds of examples and vulgarities. He adds, "Our discovery reveals the very low standard of the lectures then delivered at the University."

Loesche also remarks that "these Dicta have contributed to destroy the legend of Melanchthon's gentleness and kindliness."[6]

In connection with the legend of his kindliness, Loesche refers to a remark made by Melanchthon, according to the "*Dicta*," about the year 1553: "Whoever murders a tyrant, as did those who murdered N. in Lithuania, offers a holocaust to God."[7] Such views regarding the lawfulness of murdering tyrants he seems to have derived from his study of the classics. He had, moreover, already given expression to them long before this, referring to Henry VIII. of England, who had ceased to favour the Reformation as conducted in Germany. In a letter to his friend Veit Dietrich he wishes, that God would send a brave assassin to rid the world of the tyrant.[8]

[1] Page 184. [2] Page 160. [3] Page 161.
[4] "Vita Melanchthonis," c. 22.
[5] Page 177. [6] Page 19. [7] Page 159.
[8] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 1076. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 400.

Melanchthon was in reality far from tolerant, and in his demands for the punishment of heretics he went to great lengths. It is generally known how he gave it as his opinion, in 1557, that the execution of the Spanish doctor, Michael Servetus, which took place at Geneva in 1553 at the instance of Calvin, was a "pious and memorable example for posterity."[1] He wrote to Calvin, on October 14, 1554, concerning the proceedings against Servetus, who had denied the Trinity as well as the divinity of Christ, as follows: "I agree entirely with your sentence; I also declare that your authorities have acted wisely and justly in putting this blasphemous man to death."[2] When the severity of the step was blamed by some, he expressed his surprise at the objectors in a letter of August 20, 1555, to Bullinger at Zürich, and sent him a little treatise defending and recommending similar sentences.[3] He there proves that false doctrines should be treated as notorious blasphemies, and that the secular authorities were accordingly bound by the Divine law to punish them with the utmost severity; Divine chastisements were to be apprehended should the authorities, out of a false sense of pity, show themselves remiss in extirpating erroneous doctrines. Such was indeed the teaching at Wittenberg, as evinced, for instance, by a disputation at the University, where Melanchthon's friend and colleague, George Major, branded the contrary opinion as "impudent and abominable."[4]

Characteristic of Melanchthon, though hitherto little noticed, were the severity and obstinacy with which he sought to carry his intolerance into practice. He relentlessly called in the assistance of the secular authorities against the canons of Cologne who had remained faithful to the religion of their fathers.[5] As to his opponents within his own fold he demanded that the rulers should punish them, particularly the Anabaptists, not merely as sedition-mongers and rebels, but on account of their doctrinal peculiarities. Their rejection of infant baptism he regarded as one of those blasphemies which ought to be punished by death; the denial of original sin and the theory that the Sacraments were merely signs he looked upon as similar blasphemies. At least those Anabaptists, "who are the heads and leaders," and who refuse to abjure their errors, "should be put to death by the sword as seditious men and blasphemers." "Others, who have been led astray, and who, though not so defiant, refuse to recant, should be treated as madmen and sent to jail."[6]

[1] "Corp. ref.," 9, p. 133, in a work against Thamer. Cp. N. Paulus, "Servets Hinrichtung im lutherischen Urteil," "Hist.-pol. Blätter," 136, 1905, p. 161 ff., and "Luther und die Gewissensfreiheit," 1905, pp. 40–53; likewise "Protestantismus und Toleranz in 16. Jahrh.," 1911.

[2] "Corp. ref.," 8, p. 362.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 524.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 852.

[5] Ellinger, *loc. cit.*, p. 602.

[6] Paulus, "Luther und die Gewissensfreiheit," p. 47 ff. Paulus quotes from a pamphlet of Melanchthon's—which escaped the notice of the editors of his works—entitled "Prozess, wie es soll gehalten werden mit den Wiedertäufern," and dated 1557. Here we read that even the Anabaptist articles which did not concern the secular

Of these principles concerning the coercion of both Catholics and sectarians we have an enduring memorial in Melanchthon's work dated 1539, and entitled "On the office of Princes."[1] Nor did he fail to incite the Lutheran authorities to adopt, in the interests of public worship, coercive measures against negligent Protestants: "I should be pleased were the authorities to make a stringent rule of driving the people to church, particularly on holidays."[2]

His fondness for the use of coercion in furthering his own religious views is apparent throughout his career, and how congenial it was to him is clear from the fact that he manifested this leaning at the very outset of the reforms at Wittenberg, even before Luther had seen his way to do the same.

As early as October 20, 1521, subsequent to the changes in public worship which had been effected by the apostate Augustinians supported by some Wittenberg professors such as Carlstadt, Amsdorf, and Jonas, Melanchthon in a written admonition told the Elector, that, as a Christian Prince, he should "make haste to abrogate the abuse of the Mass" in his country and principality, unmindful of the calumnies to which this might give rise, "in order that your Electoral Highness may not, like Capharnaum, be reproached by Christ on the Last Day on account of the great grace and mercy which, without any work of ours, has been shown in your Electoral Highness's lands, the Holy Evangel being revealed, manifested, and brought to light, and yet all to no purpose"; God would require at his hands an account for the great grace of Luther's mission.[3]

In this admonition, brimful of the most bitter prejudice, we find for the first time the principle laid down, that the "salvation of his soul required of a Christian Prince" the prohibition of the olden Catholic worship.

In point of fact Melanchthon was frequently ahead of Luther in carrying the latter's theories to their logical conclusion, utterly regardless of rights infringed. Thus, for instance, he was before Luther in reaching the conclusion that religious vows were invalid.

The conviction and enthusiasm with which, from the

government were to be punished as blasphemies, as for instance the rejection of infant baptism and the denial of the Trinity. Such articles were not to be regarded as of no account, "for the Jewish fallacy that Christ did not exist previous to His Incarnation is plainly blasphemous, and so is the denial of original sin," etc. Then follows the list of penalties. The memorandum is signed by the theologians Melanchthon, J. Brenz, J. Marbach, J. Andreae, G. Karg, P. Eber, J. Pistorius and J. Rungius.

[1] Paulus, *ibid.*, p. 45: "No less than nine reasons are alleged to prove that Christian rulers, like the Jewish kings, are bound by Divine law to root out idolatry."

[2] Letter to the Margrave George of Brandenburg, September 14, 1531, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 538.

[3] Ellinger, *loc. cit.*, p. 154. Paulus, *loc. cit.*, p. 5.

very outset, he took Luther's side was due, as he repeatedly avers, to motives of a moral and religious order; he backed up Luther, so he assures us, because he hoped thereby to promote a reform of morals. "I am conscious of having taken up the study of theology for no other reason than to amend our lives."[1] What he here states as a young man of twenty-eight, he made use of to console and encourage himself with later. What he had in mind was, of course, the ostensibly hopeless decline of morals under Popery. This he painted in vivid colours borrowed from Luther, for he himself had never come into any such close contact with the abuses as would have enabled him to reach a reliable and independent opinion of his own. Having thoroughly aroused his hatred of the Papacy and convinced himself of the urgent necessity of combating the vicious decadence and intellectual darkness brought into the world by Antichrist, he is wont to depict the ideal of his own thoughts and efforts; this was the "*disciplina et obedientia populi Dei*" to be achieved by means of an education at once religious and Humanistic.

### 3. Melanchthon at the Zenith of His Career. His Mental Sufferings

Various traits of Melanchthon already alluded to may serve favourably to impress the unbiassed reader, even though his views be different. We now proceed to sum these up, supplementing them by a few other details of a similar nature.

#### *Favourable Traits.*

The many touching and heartfelt complaints concerning the moral disorders prevalent in the Protestant Churches are peculiar to Melanchthon. Luther, it is true, also regretted them, but his regret is harshly expressed and he is disposed to lay the blame on the wrong shoulders. Melanchthon, with his praiseworthy concern for discipline and ordered doctrine, was naturally filled with deep misgivings when the preaching of the Evangel resulted in moral disorder and waywardness in views and doctrine. This explains why he was so ready to turn to the authorities to implore their assistance in establishing that

[1] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 615.

stable, Christian government which was his ideal. (Below, p. 372 f.)

Above all, he was desirous of seeing the foundations of the Empire and the rights of the Emperor safeguarded, so long as the new Evangel was not endangered. None of those who thought as he did at Wittenberg were more anxious lest the religious movement should jeopardise the peace ; in none of them is the sense of responsibility so marked as in Melanchthon. Being by nature as well as by education less strong-hearted than Luther, he was not so successful as the latter in repressing his misery at the consequences of his position. To this his correspondence, which is full of interest and characteristic of his moods, is a striking witness.

Yet, amidst all the complaints we find in these letters, we hardly come across any statement concerning personal troubles of conscience. As a layman, he had not to reproach himself with any apostasy from the sacred office of the priesthood. Unlike Luther and his other friends, from his youth upward his studies and his profession had not been ecclesiastical. The others had once been religious or priests and had, by their marriage, violated a strict law of the Church, which was not the case with him.

His fine mental powers he devoted to the service of Humanism, seeking to promote the cause of education, particularly at the University of Wittenberg, but also elsewhere, by his many-sided writings in the domain of worldly learning and culture. We need only recall his works on rhetoric and grammar, on the ancient philosophy, more particularly the Aristotelian, on dialectics, ethics, and psychology. Such works from his ready but careful pen created for him a great and permanent field of activity, and at the same time helped to distract him amidst the sad realities of life and his own bitter experiences. He openly declared his preference for Humanistic studies, stating that he had been drawn into the theological controversies quite against his will.

It was to his philosophic mode of thought that he owed the self-control which he possessed in so remarkable a degree. Often we are put in mind of the stoic when we hear him, the scholar, giving the soft answer to the insults heaped on him in his own circle and then quietly proceeding on his own way. And yet his character was irritable and prone to

passionate anger, as on one occasion some lazy students at the University learnt to their cost. Hence his moderation in his dealings with his Wittenberg colleagues is all the more remarkable.

In his family life Melanchthon has been described as a model of industry, love of order and domesticity. He rose before daybreak in order to deal with his large correspondence; his letters, full of sympathy for friends and those who stood in need of help, were carefully written, and usually couched in Latin. German he did not write so fluently as Luther. In his Latin letters to Humanist friends he often drops into Greek, particularly when anxious to conceal anything, for instance, when he has to complain of Luther. His intimate and friendly intercourse with kindred spirits, such as Camerarius, is a pleasing trait in his character; not less so is the benevolence and unselfishness his letters attest, which indeed he often carried so far as to deprive himself of the needful. His home life was a happy one and his children were well brought up, though his son-in-law, Sabinus, a man of great talent, caused him much grief by his want of conjugal fidelity, which was a source of scandal to the family and also damaged the reputation of Wittenberg.

### *Melanchthon's Relations with Luther.*

In Melanchthon's mental history, no less than in the external circumstances of his life, stands out prominently, his connection with Luther, of which we have already recounted the beginnings.

The remarkable relations existing between Melanchthon and Luther abound in psychological traits characteristic of both. So intimate were they that others of the party were disposed to see in their friendship the excellent working of the evangelical spirit, the harmony and union of mind of the two most eminent leaders of the new movement.

To Melanchthon Luther's higher mission was as good as proved (above pp. 322, 355). To Capito he declared: "I am convinced that he carries out his work not merely with prudence but with the best of consciences, since he appears to have been destined by God for this purpose; for never could one man carry so many along with him unless he were animated by the Spirit of God. He has not acted harshly towards any, save some of the sophists, and even had he done so, we must remember that in our times a

sharp tongue is needed, since he is the first who has preached the Gospel for a long while. Leave him to the working of his own spirit and resist not the will of God! This matter must not be judged by human standards. The Gospel is proclaimed that it may be an offence to the godless and that the sheep of Israel may return to their God."[1]

Thus Melanchthon in 1521. We may compare the promises Luther held out to those who were filled with faith to his own happy expectations of the outcome of his relations with Melanchthon: "There, faith sets to work with joy and charity," "to serve others and to be helpful to them"; the consoling words of St. Paul (Phil. ii. 1 ff.) were being fulfilled in brotherly unity, "consolation in Christ, comfort of charity, society of the spirit, bowels of commiseration," and the result would be a "free, willing, happy life"; "when the heart thus hears the voice of Christ, it must be joyful and receive entire consolation."[2]

In Melanchthon's case, however, these promises were not realised in the event; on the contrary, inward disappointment and mental suffering were increasingly to become his portion.

Between 1528 and 1530 he openly admitted that he was burdened with cares and troubles beyond measure, and only consoled himself with the thought that the Day of Judgment must be at the door. He was suffering all the pangs of hell on account of the sights he was forced to witness, and would much rather die than continue to suffer; the state of ecclesiastical affairs caused him unspeakable pain, and not a day passed that he did not long for death.[3] Complaints such as these are to be found in his correspondence till the very end of his life, so that his most recent Protestant biographer speaks of his letters, more particularly those to Camerarius, as witnessing to the "anxiety, misery and profound mental suffering" which "consumed him"; he also alludes to the "wine trodden out with such bitter pain" which posterity enjoys, thanks to his labours. "Most of these productions [the letters to Camerarius] it is impossible to read without feeling the deepest sympathy." "Even his severest accuser will assuredly be disarmed when he sees what Melanchthon suffered."[4]

At the commencement of the 'thirties he bewails his "unhappy fate" which had entangled him in religious disputes,[5] and, seven years later, we have this startling confession: "The

[1] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 157.

[2] "Von der Freyheit eynes Christen Menschen," "Werke," Weim. ed., 7, p. 34 f., 29; Erl. ed., 27, pp. 195 f., 187.

[3] Cp. above, p. 324 ff.

[4] Ellinger, *loc. cit.*, pp. 604, 608.

[5] To Bishop Andreas Cricius, October 27, 1532, in Kawerau, "Die Versuche, Melanchthon zur kath. Kirche zurückzuführen," p. 13, from T. Wierzbowski, "Materialy," etc., Warsaw, 1900.

cruel dolours of soul which I have endured for three years on end, and the other cares which each day brings, have wasted me to such an extent that I fear I cannot live much longer."[1] In the next decade we have another confession to the same effect: "I shall not be sorry to leave this prison ('*erygastulum*') when he [Luther, whom Melanchthon here calls '*infestus*'] throws me over."[2]

The various stages of his unhappy life, the outward influences under which he came and many other accompanying circumstances, are now known from various sources.

As early as 1523 and 1524 Melanchthon began to free himself to some extent from the spell cast over him by his domineering friend. He was in the first instance repelled by the coarseness of Luther's literary style, and also by much which seemed to him exaggerated in his ways, more particularly by his denial of free-will. (Above, p. 346 f.) The sensitive nature of Melanchthon also took offence at certain things in Luther's private life, and his own observations were confirmed by the sharp eyes of his bosom friend Camerarius (Joachim Kammermeister), who had migrated to Wittenberg in 1522. Their exchange of secret confidences concerning Wittenberg affairs is unmistakable. Melanchthon felt very lonely after the departure of Camerarius and missed the stimulating intellectual intercourse at Wittenberg, which had become a necessity to him. Frequently he complains, even as early as 1524, that he met with no sympathy, and sometimes he does not exclude even Luther. At Wittenberg he felt like a lame cobbler.[3] "There is no one amongst my comrades and friends whose conversation appeals to me. All the others [Luther is here excepted] have no time for me, or else they belong to the common herd ('*vulgus sunt*')."[4] Any real friendship was out of the question at the University, since there were no kindred spirits; his intimacies were mere "wolves' friendships,"[5] to

[1] To Camerarius, November 27, 1539, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 840: "*dolores animi acerbissimi et continui.*"

[2] To Bucer, August 28, 1544, "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 474. In the same letter: "*noster Pericles* [Luther] *rursus tonare cœpit vehementissime*"; Amsdorf was inciting him against the writer on account of the question of the Sacrament.

[3] To Camerarius, October 31, 1524, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 683.

[4] To the same, March 23, 1525, *ibid.*, p. 729: "*Reliqui vulgus sunt.*"

[5] To the same, July 4, 1526, *ibid.*, p. 804. See his letter on Luther's marriage in our vol. ii., p. 176.

use an expression of Plato's. He envies, so he says, those who were surrounded by studious pupils and could devote all their energies to study, far from the turmoil of religious controversy.

The letter of censure which he wrote on Luther's marriage is a strange mixture of annoyance that this step should be taken at so critical a juncture, of displeasure at Luther's thoughtless buffoonery and frivolous behaviour, and, on the other hand, of forbearance, nay, admiration, for the man who, in other respects, still appeared to him so great. "That his friends [Melanchthon and Camerarius] had privately criticised Luther's behaviour is proved beyond a doubt from a remark in the letter on Luther's marriage."[1]

The contrast between their wives was also unfavourable to the amity existing between Luther and Melanchthon. The daughter of the Burgomaster of Wittenberg, Catherine Krapp, whom Melanchthon had married, seems to have been a rather haughty patrician, who was disposed to look down on Catherine von Bora, whose family, though aristocratic, had fallen on evil days. In a letter of a friend of Luther the "tyranny of women" is once referred to as a disturbing factor, and the context shows that the complaint was drawn forth by Melanchthon's wife and not by Bora.[2]

Melanchthon's troubles were, however, mostly caused by the differences, literary and theological, which sprang up between Luther and himself, and by his experiences and disappointments in Church matters and questions of conscience.

Luther's violent and incautious manner of proceeding led him to surmise, to his great regret, that many had attached themselves to the cause of the innovations merely from a desire for the freedom of the flesh, and that the rising against the older Church had let loose a whole current

[1] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 619, p. 188, n. Melanchthon reminds Camerarius that they had "often censured" Luther's *βωμολοχία*. Cp. vol. ii., p. 178. Camerarius altered not only this letter in the printed edition, but also others; for instance, that mentioned above, p. 364, note 4, about the "*vulgus*."

[2] Cruciger to Veit Dietrich, August 4, 1537, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 398: "*Cum alia multa, tum maxime obstat ἡ γυναικοτυραννίς.*" K. Sell, "Phil. Melanchthon und die deutsche Reformation," 1898, p. 57: "The wives do not seem to have got on so well."

of base elements.[1] The virulence with which Luther attacked everything could, in Melanchthon's opinion, only tend to alienate the better sort, i.e. the very people whose help was essential to the carrying out of any real reform.

As early as 1525 he began to find fault with Luther's too turbulent ways. In 1526, on the appearance of Erasmus's "*Hyperaspistes*," the scholar's incisive and brilliant rejoinder to Luther's "*De servo Arbitrio*," Melanchthon feared some unhappy outbreak, and, accordingly, he urgently begged the latter to keep silence in the interests of truth and justice, which he thought to be more likely on the side of Erasmus. To Camerarius he wrote, on April 11, 1526: "Oh, that Luther would hold his tongue! I had hoped that advancing years and his experience of the prevailing evils would have quietened him, but now I see that he is growing even more violent ('*subinde vehementiorem fieri*') in every struggle into which he enters. This causes me great pain."[2] Erasmus himself he assured later by letter, that he had "never made any secret of this at Wittenberg," i.e. of his displeasure at the tracts Luther had published against the great Humanist, for one reason "because they were not conducive to the public welfare."[3]

It was inevitable that a certain coolness should spring up between them, for though Melanchthon was supple enough to be cautious in his personal dealings with Luther, yet there can be no doubt that many of his strictures duly reached the ears of his friend. The more determined Lutherans, such as Aquila and Amsdorf, even formed a party to thwart his plans.[4] Melanchthon also complains of opponents at the Court. Those who had been dissatisfied with his doings at the Visitation "fanned the flames at Court," and so much did he suffer through these intrigues that,

[1] "Many of the people," he writes in 1524, "attach themselves to Luther as the champion of freedom; they are weary of the good old customs . . . many of them think that Luther merely teaches contempt of human traditions." (In the *Epitome* addressed to the Landgrave of Hesse [above, p. 348, n. 1].) Cp. Döllinger, *loc. cit.*, 3, p. 301. He laments in similar fashion the results of Luther's behaviour in 1527, complaining that the people had become "over-confident and had lost the sense of fear" because they heard nothing about penance. This one-sided preaching of the Gospel resulted "in greater errors and sins than had ever existed before." Döllinger, *ibid.*, 3, p. 302. Melanchthon regarded the writings of his friend, particularly on account of their exaggeration, with "ever-increasing distrust." "The great man's boisterousness began to alarm him. . . . There is no doubt that it was from this quarter that the misgivings first arose which nipped and caused to wither the blossoms of their previous so intimate relationship." Thus Ellinger, "Melanchthon," p. 187.

[2] "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 794. [3] May 12, 1536. *Ibid.*, 3, p. 68 *seq.*

[4] Caspar Aquila, as early as 1527, accused him of abandoning Christianity and of being a Papist. Cp. Melanchthon to Aquila, November 17, 1527. "Corp. ref.," 4, p. 961. Cp. the letter to the same of the middle of November, 1527, *ibid.*, p. 959.

according to a later statement of his, his "life was actually in danger" ("*ut vita mea in discrimen veniret*").[1]

So greatly was he overwhelmed that, in 1527, he even declared he would rather his son should die than occupy a position of such sore anxiety as his own.[2]

In spite of the growing independence displayed by Melanchthon, Luther continued to show him the greatest consideration and forbearance, and even to heap literary praise on him, as he did, for instance, in his Preface to Melanchthon's very mediocre Exposition of the Epistle to the Colossians.[3] He was all the more set on attaching Melanchthon to himself and his cause by such eulogies, because he dreaded lest his comrade's preference for his Humanistic labours should one day deprive the new faith of his so powerful support.

The command of the Elector was afterwards to send the learned but timid man to the Diets, notwithstanding that he was quite unsuited for political labours on the great stage of the world. We know already what his feelings were at Spires and then again at Augsburg. His most recent biographer says of the earlier Diet: "The depression induced in him by the Protest of Spires and the growth of Zwinglianism, increased still more during his journey home and the first days after his return; he felt profoundly downcast and looked forward to the future with the utmost anxiety. From his standpoint he certainly had good reason for his fear."[4] At Augsburg he suffered so much that Luther wrote to him: "You torment yourself without respite. . . . It is not theology, however, which torments you but your philosophy, and therefore your fears are groundless."[5] And later: "I have been through greater inward torments than I trust you will ever experience, and such as I would not wish any man, not even our bitterest opponents there. And yet, amidst such troubles, I have often been cheered up by the words of a brother, for instance, Pomeranus, yourself, Jonas, or some other. Hence, why not listen to us, who speak to you, not according to the flesh or world, but undoubtedly according to God and the Holy Ghost?" But you prefer to lean on your philosophy; "Led away by your reason you act according to your own foolishness and are killing yourself . . . whereas this matter is really beyond us and must be left to God." Luther felt convinced that his "prayer for Melanchthon was most certainly being answered."[6]

The hope that Melanchthon would get the better of his depression after the momentous Diet was over was only partially realised.

The conviction that there was no chance of reunion with

[1] To the Saxon minister Carlowitz, April 28, 1548, "Corp. ref.," 6, p. 879 *seq.*

[2] To Justus Jonas, November 25, 1527, "Corp. ref.," 1, p. 913: "*quam si vivus in eiusmodi miserias incideret.*" [3] See above, p. 321.

[4] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 241. [5] On June 13, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 35.

[6] On June 30, 1530, p. 50.

the existing Church, which he had reached at Augsburg, pierced him to the depths of his soul. "In his quality of theologian," says Kawerau, "the thought of the Church's oneness caused him to endure the bitterest agonies, particularly between 1530 and 1532"; if certain of the Catholic leaders sought to draw him over to their side, there was "some justification for their attempts," to be accounted for by the impression he had given at Augsburg, viz. of not being quite at home among the Evangelicals.[1] What seemed to confirm this impression, adds Kawerau, was "that Melanchthon in his printed, and still more in his epistolary communications, repeatedly gave occasion to people to think that it might be worth while approaching him with fresh proposals of conciliation."[2]

Of the psychological struggle hinted at by Kawerau, through which he, who, after Luther, was the chief promoter of the innovations, had to pass, it is possible to gain many a glimpse from contemporary documents.

The wrong idea which he came more and more to cherish amounted to this: The true doctrine of the Catholic Church of Christ, as against the *Roman* Catholic Church of the day, is that to be found "in the Epistles of the Apostles and in the recognised ecclesiastical writers."[3] Without succeeding in finding any position of real safety, he insists on the necessity of sharing the "consensus of the Catholic Church of Christ" and of belonging to the true, ancient and "sublime '*cœtus ecclesiæ*' over which rules the Son of God."[4] Hence comes what we find in the Wittenberg certificates of Ordination which he drew up, in which the "*doctrina catholicæ ecclesiæ*," taken, of course, in the above uncertain and wholly subjective sense, is declared to have been accepted by the "*ordinandi*" and to be the best testimony to their office. In this conception of the Church "we find the explanation of the great struggle which it cost him,

[1] "Die Versuche," p. 65. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[3] This proposition stands at the head of the 1535 edition of the "*Loci*." He had intended in this work, so he says, "*colligere doctrinam catholicam ecclesiae Christi*," as taught by those witnesses. "Corp. ref.," 21, p. 333. In 1540 he declared further that the Churches accepting the Augsburg Confession held fast to the "*perpetuus consensus veræ ecclesiæ omnium temporum*," as to that of the Prophets and Apostles; Ambrose, Augustine, etc., agreed with them – if only they were rightly understood. "Corp. ref.," 11, p. 494.

[4] Paolo Vergerio, January 13, 1541, "Corp. ref.," 4, p. 22.

when, after 1530, he had to face the fact that the schism was real and definitive. . . . In his conception, the true faith was thus no longer the new Lutheran understanding of the Gospel, but rather the ancient creeds."[1]

Cordatus was not so far wrong when he declared, referring to Melanchthon, that at Wittenberg there were men "learned in languages who would rather read and listen to a dead Erasmus than a living Luther."[2]

Erasmus himself saw in Melanchthon's exposition of Romans and in the dedication of the same which the author privately sent him on October 25, 1532, a "clear corroboration of the suspicion that he had come to dislike his own party" ("*se suorum pigere*").[3] In the aforesaid dedication Melanchthon had complained, as he often did, of the religious "controversies and quarrels" which were quite repugnant to him: "As neither side cares for moderation, both have refused to listen to us." These and such-like admissions "caused Erasmus to think that he was desirous of forsaking the evangelical camp."[4] In the very year of Erasmus's death he wrote to him: "I cordially agree with you on most of the questions under discussion."[5] The fondness of the Wittenbergers for the crude and paradoxical, so he adds, discreetly veiling his meaning in Greek, failed entirely to appeal to him; he was anxious to find "better-sounding" formulæ in which to embody doctrine, but here he was faced by "danger." He had reached an age when he had learnt to treat questions of faith more gingerly than of yore.[6] "Thus, in the presence of Erasmus, he here repudiates the Melanchthon of the early years of the Reformation."[7]

At Wittenberg there was then a rumour that Melanchthon intended to migrate elsewhere, because he no longer agreed with Luther and his set.[8] That such was actually his intention has since been confirmed.

[1] Kawerau, "Versuche," p. 66 f.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33. Cordatus to Cruciger, August 20, 1536, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 159. In a letter to the latter of September 17, 1536, he bases his blame of Melanchthon on his praise of Luther ("*Præceptor noster, qui est doctor doctorum theologiæ. Amen.*"), to whose doctrine it was necessary to hold fast.

[3] "*Vita Erasmi*," ed. Lugd. Batav., 1615, p. 259. Kawerau, *ibid.*, p. 17.

[4] Kawerau, *ibid.*, p. 31.

[5] "*In plerisque controversiis iudicandis meam opinionem ad tuam sententiam libenter adiungo.*" Letter of May 12, 1536, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 68 *seq.*

[6] His theses on the Primacy and his other polemical statements (see below, xx. 4) are scarcely "better-sounding." A good resolution here made runs as follows: "*Ad has materias tractandas afferam aliquanto plus curæ ac studii quam antea.*"

[7] Kawerau's opinion, p. 33.

[8] To Camerarius, November 30, 1536, "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 193. After mentioning the report Melanchthon adds: "*Nihil mihi obicitur, nisi quod dicor plusculum laudare bona opera*"; all the truth in this was that "*quædam minus horride dico quam ipsi*," i.e. than Luther and his more enthusiastic followers.

Only in 1900 was a letter unearthed—written by Melanchthon in this critical period (1532), to Andreas Cricius, Catholic bishop of Plozk, and an ardent Humanist—in which he deplores in touching language the "unhappy fate" which had embroiled him in the religious "quarrels."[1] In the beginning he had taken part in the movement started by Luther under the impression that "certain points connected with piety would be emphasised, and this had, all along, been his object"; his efforts had ever been to "moderate" and to "put an end to controversy"; he also exerted himself "to vindicate the importance of the Church's constitution."[2] He expresses his readiness to accept a post of professor which the Bishop might see fit to offer, in which he might find a refuge from the storms at Wittenberg: "If you will point out to me a haven of refuge where I can promote and advance the learning so dear to us both, and in which I have acquired some little proficiency, then I will submit to your authority." In the same letter, however, he points out that he could never approve of the "cruelty of the opponents" of the Protestant cause, nor would the public decision to be expected fall out in accordance with their ideas; yet neither did he agree with those who wished to destroy the substance of the Church. Cricius appears to have pointed out to him, in a letter now no longer extant, that, before he, the Bishop, could do anything it would be necessary for Melanchthon to sever his connection with the Evangelicals. This he could not bring himself to do. "If you have a more feasible proposal to make, then I will accept it as a Divine call."[3]

[1] With the expression "unhappy fate" we may compare his lament over the "*rixæ religionum, in quas meo quodam fato incidi*" (To the Imperial Secretary Obernburger, June 23, 1532, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 602). Kawerau remarks (p. 15): "It is indeed sad to find Luther's greatest friend speaking of his having been involved in the ecclesiastical struggles of his time as a misfortune."

[2] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 313: "He probably made use here of an intentionally ambiguous phrase in order to curry favour with the Bishop, for it is clear that he never meant to promote a restoration of the hierarchical order, though Cricius may well have supposed this from his letter. Hence we see that in the execution of his plans, Melanchthon was not above having recourse to craft."

[3] Letter of October 27, 1532. For its publication by T. Wierzbowski see Kawerau, p. 78, n. 17. Kawerau rightly emphasises the fact that, according to the text of the letter, Melanchthon refuses to break with Luther merely "on the weak ground that he, as a right-minded man (*vir bonus*), could not make up his mind to approve, let alone admire, the cruel and bloodthirsty plans of the Romanists. . . . Should the '*moderata consilia*' prevail amongst the Catholic bishops, then he would be quite willing to come to terms. . . . We cannot but see how gladly he would have taken refuge in a haven where he would be safe from the theological storm. This letter shows him as a moderate, and, at the same time, as a true representative of Humanist interests." For the further efforts of Cricius, who wrote in 1535, that he was acting on behalf of, or at least with the express sanction of, the Pope and the Cardinals, see Kawerau, p. 18 ff. Melanchthon's writing of August, 1532, to the Elector-Cardinal Albert of Mayence,

Shortly before this, on January 31, 1532, Melanchthon had expressed the wish to Duke Magnus of Mecklenburg, on the occasion of the re-establishment of the University of Rostock, that a "quiet spot might be found for him," lamenting that his time was taken up in matters "altogether repugnant to my character and the learned labours I have ever loved."[1]

Hence there is no doubt that, at that time, utterly sick of his work at Luther's side, he was perfectly ready to change his lodgings. "It was a joyless life that Melanchthon led at Wittenberg. His admiration for Luther was indeed not dead, but mutual trust was wanting."[2]

In 1536 the repressed discontent of the ultra-Lutherans broke out into open persecution of Melanchthon. At the head of his assailants was Conrad Cordatus, who had sniffed heresy in the stress Melanchthon laid on the will and on man's co-operation in the work of Justification; his first step was to begin a controversy with Cruciger, Melanchthon's friend.[3] At about that time, Luther, in his annoyance with Melanchthon, declared: "I am willing enough to admit Master Philip's proficiency in the sciences and in philosophy, nothing more; but, with God's help, I shall have to chop off the head of philosophy, for so it must be."[4] Nevertheless, to retain the indispensable support of so great a scholar and to preserve peace at the University, Luther preferred to seek a compromise, on the occasion of a solemn Disputation held on June 1, 1537. At the same time, it is true, he characterised the thesis on the "necessity of good works for salvation" as reprehensible and misleading.[5]

Further difficulties were raised in 1537 by Pastor Jacob Schenk, who would have it that Melanchthon had made treasonable concessions in the interests of the Catholics in the matter of the giving of the chalice. This strained still further his relations with Luther, who had already long been dimly suspicious of Melanchthon's Zwinglian leanings concerning the Supper. The Elector, who was also vexed, consulted Luther privately concerning Melanchthon; Luther, however, again expressed his regard for him, and deprecated his "being driven from the University," adding, nevertheless, that, should he seek to assert his opinion on the Supper, then "God's truth would have to be put first."[6]

The intervention of the Elector in this case, and, generally, the interference of the great Lords in ecclesiastical affairs—which fre-

in which, in the most respectful terms, he begs the Primate of Germany, so hated by Luther, "to procure a milder remedy (cp. '*moderata consilia*') for the dissensions in the Churches," is also of importance; all right-minded men in Europe (*boni omnes*) were looking to him. "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 611 *seq.* In these letters we see his earnest efforts "to bring about peace and avert civil war," as he writes to Erasmus.

[1] On January 31, 1532, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 567.

[2] Ellinger, "Melanchthon," p. 353.

[3] Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 445 *seq.*

[4] Kolde, "Anal. Lutherana," p. 266.

[5] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 349.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 351 f.

quently marred his plans for conciliation—embittered him more and more as years passed.

He was perfectly aware that the influential patrons of the innovations were animated by mere egoism, avarice and lust for power. "The rulers have martyred me so long," he once declared, "that I have no wish to go on living amid such suffering."[1]

Yet Melanchthon's own inclination was more and more in the direction of leaving ecclesiastical affairs to the secular authorities. In his practice he abandoned the idea of an invisible Church even more completely than did Luther. The rigid doctrinal system for which he came to stand in the interests of the pure preaching of the faith, the duty which he assigned to the State of seeing that the proclamation of the Gospel conformed to the standard of the Augsburg Confession, and finally the countenance he gave to the persecution of sectarians by the State, and to State regulation of the Church, all this showed that he was anxious to make of the Church a mere department of the State.[2] The Princes, as principal members of the Church, must, according to him, see "that errors are removed and consciences comforted"; above all they were of course to assist in "checking the encroachments of the Popes."[3] "To us at

[1] Ellinger, p. 414. The exclamation was called forth by his sad experience over the Naumburg bishopric (see below, p. 375, and vol. v., xxx. 4).

[2] This tendency is also manifest in Melanchthon's many labours for the promotion of education. In place of the old, independent Universities of the Middle Ages, enjoying ecclesiastical freedom and partaking of a quasi-international character, there sprang up, wherever Melanchthon's influence prevailed, High Schools with a more limited horizon destined to supply the sovereign of the land with servants for the State, officials and preachers, but, above all, to safeguard the true Evangel. "All the reformed Universities established at Melanchthon's instance," remarks Carl Sell, a Protestant theologian, "Marburg, Tübingen, Frankfort-on-the-Oder, Leipzig, Königsberg, Greifswald, Heidelberg, Rostock, Jena, and finally Helmstädt, were State Universities, and, like Wittenberg, intended as citadels of the pure faith. Hence their professors were all bound by the new Confession. . . . The old, unfettered liberty of the Church's Universities was now subordinated to the ends and needs of the State." "Philip Melanchthon als Lehrmeister des protest. Deutschland," 1897, p. 19. *Ibid.*, p. 11, Sell thus characterises the State-Church promoted by Melanchthon and by Luther likewise: "The German Reformation never succeeded in producing a new ecclesiasticism. What grew up beneath its sway was rather a confessional State, which declared itself at one with that form of the Christian religion which the head of the State regarded as right."

[3] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 281. "Symbol. Bücher,[10]" p. 339 (in the Articles of Schmalkalden, "*Tractatus de potestate papæ*").

the present day it appears strange—though at the time of the Reformation this was not felt at all—that Melanchthon, in the Article of the Augsburg Confession concerning priestly marriage, should have [in the '*Variata*'] made the appeal to the Emperor so comprehensive that the ecclesiastical privileges of the Princes practically became an article of faith."[1]

It also displeased him greatly that Luther in his writings should so frequently employ vile and abusive epithets when speaking of great persons. He was loath to see the Catholic Princes thus vilified, particularly when, as in the case of Albert, Elector of Mayence, he had hopes of their assistance. On June 16, 1538, Luther read aloud from the pulpit, and afterwards published in print, a statement of "frightful violence" against this Prince, moved thereto, as it would appear, by the respectful manner in which the Archbishop had been treated by Melanchthon.[2] The latter made no secret of his entire disapproval, and it is to be hoped that others at Wittenberg shared his opinion of this document in which Luther speaks of the German Prince as a false and perjured man, town-clerk and mord-bishop of Halle.[3]

The fact is, however, that it was in many instances Melanchthon's own pusillanimity and too great deference to the Protestant Princes which caused him to sanction things which afterwards he regretted. For instance, we hear him complaining, when alluding to the cruelty of Henry VIII. of England, of the "terrible wounds" inflicted on him by a "tyrant." The "tyrant" to whom he here refers was the bigamist, Philip of Hesse. Melanchthon had been too compliant in the case of both these sovereigns. When Henry VIII., who had fallen out with his spouse, made overtures to the Wittenbergers, it was Melanchthon, who, in view of the king's desire to contract a fresh marriage, suggested he might take a second wife. Concerning Philip of Hesse's bigamy he had at the outset had scruples, but he set them aside from the following motive which he himself alleged not long after: "For Philip threatened to apostatise unless we should assist him."[4] His conscience

[1] Thus Kolde in the Introduction to his edition of the "Symbol. Bücher [10]" just referred to, p. xxv., n. 2, adding: "A preliminary to this is possibly to be found in 'Corp. ref.,' 3, p. 240 *seq.*"

[2] Ellinger, *loc. cit.*, pp. 354, 364.

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 422.

[4] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 377.

had reason enough to complain of the "terrible wounds" inflicted upon it by this tyrant, but for this Melanchthon himself was answerable. He even assisted personally at the marriage of the second wife, though, possibly, his presence was secured by means of a stratagem. When later, he, even more than his friends, was troubled with remorse concerning his part in the business—especially when the Landgrave, wilfully and "tyrannically," threatened the theologians with the publication of their permission—he fell a prey to a deadly sickness, due primarily to the depth of his grief and shame. Luther hastened to Weimar where he lay and, in spite of his own depression, by the brave face he put on, and also by his loving care, was able to console the stricken man so that he ultimately recovered. "Martin," so Melanchthon gratefully declared, "saved me from the jaws of death."[1]

By Philip of Hesse, Melanchthon had once before been taken to task over a falsehood of his. It had fallen to Melanchthon to draw up a memorandum, dispatched on September 1, 1538, by the Elector Johann Frederick and the Landgrave Philip, conjointly, to King Henry VIII. of England. In the draft, which was submitted to both Princes, he asserted, contrary to the real state of the case, that, in Germany, there were no Anabaptists "in those districts where the pure doctrine of the Gospel is preached," though they were to be found "where this doctrine is not preached"; this he wrote though he himself had assisted Luther previously in drawing up memoranda for localities in the immediate vicinity of Wittenberg, directed against the Anabaptists established there in the very bosom of the new Church. The Landgrave refused to agree to such a misrepresentation, even for the sake of predisposing King Henry for Lutheranism. He candidly informed the Elector that he did not agree with this passage, "for there are Anabaptists in those parts of Germany where the pure Gospel is preached just as much as in those where it is not rightly preached." In consequence the passage in question was left out, merely a general reference to the existence of Anabaptists in Germany being allowed to remain.[2]

[1] On this "miracle," see above, p. 162.

[2] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 578 *seq.* "Zeitschr. für die hist. Theol.," 28, 1858, 606 f. On Melanchthon's insincerity cp. also O. Ritschl, "Dogmengesch.," 1, 1908, p. 232.

The following example likewise shows how Melanchthon's want of uprightness and firmness contributed to raise difficulties and unpleasantness with those in power. Johann Frederick of Saxony seized upon the bishopric of Naumburg-Zeitz, and, in spite of the Emperor's warning, caused Amsdorf to be "consecrated" its bishop. The Wittenbergers, including Melanchthon, had given their sanction to this step. Afterwards, however, the latter was overwhelmed with scruples. "Tyranny has increased more and more at the Courts," exclaimed Melanchthon.—"There is no doubt that his sense of responsibility in a proceeding, which he had been driven to sanction against his better judgment, depressed him." He trembled at the thought that "the matter might well lead to warlike entanglements, and that the Emperor would resent as an insult and never forget this violent seizure of the highest spiritual principalities."[1]

Here we shall only hint at Melanchthon's attitude—again characterised by weakness and indecision—at the time of the Interim controversy. He himself, from motives of policy and out of consideration for the interests of the Court, had lent a hand in the bringing about of the Leipzig Interim. The "real" Lutherans ("*Gnesio-Lutherans*") saw in this an alliance with the Popish abomination. The "temporising policy of the Interim" in which he "became entangled," remarks Carl Sell, "called forth the righteous anger of all honest German Protestants." "Melanchthon saved his life's work only at the cost of the agony of the last thirteen years of his life . . . a real martyr—albeit a tragically guilty one—to a cause."[2] "The whole struggle of 'Gnesio-Lutheranism' with 'Philippism' consisted in employing against Melanchthon the very weapon of which Melanchthon himself had made use," viz. the "confusion of theological opinions with the Divine data which these opinions purported to represent."[3]

A redeeming feature in the life of this unhappy man, upon which one is glad to dwell after what has gone before, was his strong sense of right and wrong. In spite of all his weakness, his conscience was highly sensitive. Thus he himself supplies in many cases the moral appreciation of

[1] Ellinger, *loc. cit.*, p. 411. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 26. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

his actions in his outspoken statements and frank confessions to some trusted friend, for whom his words were also intended to serve as a guide.

To his friends he was in the habit of giving advice on their behaviour, couching such advice in the language of the scholar. Nor was he jesting when he declared that such good counsel was intended in the first instance for himself; in practice, however, the deed fell short of the will. So excellent was his theory that many of his aphorisms, in their short, classical form, became permanent principles of morality. Their influence was on a par with that of his pedagogical writings, which long held sway in the history of education.

His friends could count not only on the ethical guidance of the philosopher and Humanist, but even on his ready assistance in matters of all sorts. It was not in his nature to refuse his sympathy to anyone, and, to the students, who gladly sought his assistance, he was unable to say no.

Another valuable quality was that talent for making peace, of which he repeatedly made use in the interests of his co-religionists. His conversation and bearing were exceedingly courteous. Erasmus, for instance, speaks of his "irresistible charm" ("*gratia quædam fatalis*"). In a letter of 1531 Erasmus says: "In addition to his excellent education and rare eloquence, he possesses an irresistible charm, due more to '*genius*' than to '*ingenium*.' For this reason he stands in high esteem with noble minds, and, even amongst his enemies, there is not one who cordially hates him."[1] At the time of the Interim controversy the agents of the Duke of Saxony were desirous that the Catholic party should find men of real moderation and culture to negotiate with Melanchthon and the other leaders of the new faith. They were particularly anxious that Claudius Jaius, the Jesuit, should repair to Saxony for this purpose. Peter Canisius, apprised of this, wrote, on April 30, 1551, to Ignatius his superior, that these people were sure from experience that Jaius, with the modesty he owed to his culture, would do more good than the most violent controversies.[2]

[1] To Julius Pflug, August 20, 1531, "*Erasmi Opp.*," ed. Lugd., 3, col. 1412. Kawerau, "*Versuche*," p. 31.

[2] "*B. Petri Canisii Epistulæ*," etc., ed. O. Braunsberger, 1, p. 359 *seq.*

Before the world Melanchthon was careful to hide the growing dissension between himself and Luther.

Thus, writing on June 22, 1537, to Veit Dietrich, he says, alluding to the quarrel commenced by Cordatus, that he was working for peace at Wittenberg University. "Nor does Luther appear to be badly disposed towards us"; "no hatred exists, and should there be any it will presently break out"; for his own part he intends to be patient, "even should it come to blows ['*plaga*']."[1]

Even Luther's outbursts of anger were explained away by his more supple comrade, who exhorts his friends to possess their souls in patience and to conceal such faults from the eyes of the world. The "dreadful man," he writes to Bucer—applying to Luther the Homeric title δεινός—"often gets these boisterous fits. More is gained by ignoring them than by open contradiction. Let us therefore make use of the philosophy in which we both have been initiated, cover our wounds, and exhort others too to do the same." Luther, owing to his combativeness, was not to be depended on, and the sad part of it is that "our little Churches are tossed about with neither sail nor sober pilot"; for his part he feared victory as much as war; he was opposed to war in the cause of the Evangel because in the confusion the Court officials and the great ones of the Protestant party, the "Centaurs," would assuredly stretch out greedy hands to grasp the rights and possessions of the Church.[2]

Melanchthon was at that time in a certain sense the "one who, thanks to his moderation, kept everything together at Wittenberg. This is expressly stated by Cruciger."[3] For this his endless patience, what he himself

[1] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 383: "*Equidem studeo omni officio tueri concordiam nostræ academiæ, et scis me etiam hoc genere artis aliquid adhibere solere*," etc. It is possible that the above reference to a "*plaga*," or some other similar passage, gave rise to the singular misapprehension of certain polemics, viz. that Luther had been in the habit of coercing Melanchthon by striking him and boxing his ears, surely one of the most curious, and at the same time baseless, of all the legends concerning Luther.

[2] On November 4, 1543, "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 218.

[3] Ellinger, *loc. cit.*, p. 433. Cp. Melanchthon to Johann Sturm, August 28, 1535, "Corp. ref.," 2, p. 917: The Court had prevailed on him not to leave Wittenberg, chiefly because it regarded his presence as indispensable owing to his power for mediating: "*me putant aliquanto minus vehementem aut pertinacem esse quam sunt alii.*" He regrets, with a hint at the Luther-enthusiasts, the "*democratia aut*

terms his "servile spirit,"[1] was to some extent accountable. Yet his Humanism, and the equanimity, calmness and moderation he owed to it, doubtless served the peacemaker in good stead. To all, whether of his own party or of the opposite, he was wont to declare his abhorrence of the "*democratia aut tyrannis indoctorum.*"[2] Owing to such personal qualities of Melanchthon's, Cochlæus himself, in a letter to his friend Dantiscus, in which he attacks Melanchthon, admits that he was "nevertheless at heart very fond of him."[3]

*tyrannis indoctorum*" prevalent in both Catholic and Lutheran camps. . . . "*Non dissimulo evectos etiam esse nostros interdum ὑπὲρ τὰ ἐσκαμμένα, et multa mitigavi.*"

[1] "*Fortassis natura sum ingenio servili,*" he says in the letter to Carlowitz of April 28, 1548, "Corp. ref.," 6, p. 879.

[2] See n. 3 of last page.

[3] Hipler, "Beiträge zur Gesch. des Humanismus," p. 45. Kawerau, "*Versuche,*" p. 31.

## CHAPTER XIX

### LUTHER'S RELATIONS WITH ZWINGLI, CARLSTADT, BUGENHAGEN AND OTHERS

#### 1. Zwingli and the Controversy on the Supper

From the time that Zwingli, in 1519, commenced working on his own lines at Zürich in the cause of the religious innovations, he had borrowed more and more largely from Luther's writings. Whilst acknowledging Luther's great achievements he did not, however, sacrifice his independence. Writing in 1523 with a strong sense of what he himself had done and of the success which had attended his own efforts, he said: "I began to preach before ever I had heard of Luther. . . . I was not instructed by Luther, for, until two years ago, his very name was unknown to me, and I worked on the Bible Word alone. . . . Nor do I intend to be called after Luther, seeing that I have read but little of his doctrine. What I have read of his writings, however, is as a rule so excellently grounded on the Word of God, that no creature can overthrow it. . . . I did not learn the teaching of Christ from Luther, but from the Word of God. If Luther preaches Christ, he is doing the same as I, though, praise be to God, countless more souls have been led to God by him than by me."[1]

Little attention was paid at Wittenberg to the religious occurrences at Zürich, though they had been welcomed by Luther. Only when Zwingli sided with Carlstadt against Luther in the controversy on the Supper did the latter begin to give him more heed; this he at once did in his own fashion. He asserted, as he had already done in the case of Carlstadt, Œcolampadius and others, that Zwingli would not have known the truth concerning Christ and the Evangel "had not Luther first written on the subject"; of his own initiative he would never have dared to come to

[1] Explanation of Article xviii., "Werke," 2, 1908, p. 147.

freedom and the light; later he spoke of him as "a child of his loins" who had betrayed him.[1]

In 1526 the divergency of opinion between Luther and Zwingli on the subject of the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, already present as early as 1524, became much more apparent.[2]

Luther, in 1526, in his "Sermon von dem Sacrament," and, in 1527, in his work on the words "This is My Body," had, conformably with his theory, urged that Christ is present with the bread, and spoken not at all kindly of his Swiss gainsayers, the Zwinglians.[3] Zwingli, on his side, soon after the appearance of the last work, attacked Luther's view in a writing entitled "*Amica exegesis*" (1528); this, his first open assault on the Wittenberg doctor, he followed up with a German pamphlet on the words of Christ: "This is My Body." In these we have the protest of the sceptical rationalism of Zürich, against Luther's half-hearted doctrine on the Sacrament.

Zwingli demanded that the words of institution should be taken figuratively and the Eucharist regarded as a mere symbol of the Body of Christ. This he did with no less assurance than Luther had urged his own pet view, viz. that Christ is present together with the bread (Impanation instead of the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation). Zwingli complained bitterly of the rude tone adopted by Luther; according to him God's Word must prevail, not Luther's abusive epithets, "fanatic, devil, rogue, heretic, Trotz, Plotz, Blitz and Donner, and so on." Over and over again he roundly accuses Luther of "lying" and "falsehood," though his language is not so lurid as his adversary's. The artifices by which he sought to evade the plain sense of the words "This is My Body," were well calculated to call forth a rude contradiction from Luther. Zwingli's arbitrary recourse to the "figurative, symbolical, metaphorical" sense, Luther answered by appealing to the interpretation accepted by the whole of antiquity. At the turn of the fourth and the fifth centuries Macarius Magnes had written: "Christ has said 'This is My Body'; it is no

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 23, p. 34 f.; Erl. ed., 30, p. 11. Cp. "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 310. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 63.

[2] See below, p. 409.

[3] "Das diese Wort Christi (Das ist mein Leib etce) noch fest stehen widder die Schwermgeister," 1527, "Werke," *ibid.*, 38 ff. = 14 ff.

figure of the Body of Christ, nor a figure of His flesh, as some have been foolish enough to assert, but in truth the body and blood of Christ."[1] Concerning the promise of the Eucharist, Hilary of Poitiers declared in the fourth century: "Christ says: 'My flesh is meat indeed' (John vi. 56); as to the truth of the flesh and blood there can be no doubt. The Lord Himself teaches it and our faith confesses it, viz. that it is truly flesh and truly blood." Any other interpretation of the words of Christ he calls "*violenta atque imprudens prædicatio, aliena atque impia intelligentia.*"[2] The reproach, which at a much earlier period Ignatius of Antioch, a disciple of the Apostles, had brought forward against the Docetæ of his day, Luther might well have applied to the Zwinglians: "They refuse to confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father raised from the dead."[3]

We can understand the abhorrence which Luther conveyed by the term Sacramentarians ("*sacramentarii*"), by which he characterised all those—whether Swiss, Reformed, or followers of Carlstadt—who denied the Real Presence in the Sacrament.

The Marburg Conference of 1529, at which both Zwingli and Luther attended with their friends, did not bring any real settlement, for no compromise on the question of the Eucharist was feasible. Fourteen of the other Articles submitted by Luther were accepted, but the 15th, with this principal question, remained in suspense owing to the opposition of the Swiss. In consequence of this Luther refused to recognise Zwingli and his followers as brothers, in spite of all the prayers of his opponents. He would not concede to them Christian brotherhood but merely "Christian charity," that charity, moreover, which, as he declared, we owe even to our enemies. He again voiced it as his opinion, that, "your spirit is different from ours," which greatly incensed the other side. A statement was appended to the Fifteen Articles of Marburg, to the effect, that, on account of the Supper, they had "so far failed to reach an

[1] Fragment in Migne's "P.L.," 5, col. 348 *seq.*

[2] "*De Trinitate*," 18, c. 14. "P.L.," 10, col. 247.

[3] "*Ep. ad Smyrnæos*," 7. Migne, "P.G.," 5, col. 714. Instead of the passages here quoted, certain others were preferred in that controversy.

understanding, but that each side would exercise Christian charity towards the other so far as every man's conscience allowed."

Once, during the proceedings, Luther, to show his attachment to the literal sense of the words "This is My Body," chalked these words on the tablecloth and held it up in front of him, pointing significantly to the writing.

Luther, however, overlooked the fact, that, if once the words were taken in their literal sense, as he was perfectly right in doing, there was no alternative but to accept the Catholic interpretation, according to which the bread is actually and substantially changed into the Body of Christ, and that to say: "This is bread though Christ is present," was really out of the question. Many theologians who follow Luther in other matters, unhesitatingly admit his inconsequence.[1]

At the solemn meeting at Marburg, Luther was not to be disconcerted, not even when Zwingli argued that the words of promise of the Sacrament in St. John's Gospel (vi. 32 ff., 48 ff.), where we read: "My flesh is meat indeed," must mean "my flesh signifies meat." When Luther, no less erroneously, objected that the passage in question did not apply there, Zwingli exclaimed: "Of course not, Doctor, for that passage is the breaking of your neck." Luther replied testily: "Don't be so sure of it; necks don't break so easily; here you are in Hesse, not in Switzerland!" Zwingli was constrained to protest that, even in Switzerland, people enjoyed the protection of the law, and to explain that what he had said had not been meant by way of any threat.

[1] We are confronted with the following dilemma: "Either the strict literal sense or the purely figurative; either the Catholic sense or the Reformed." Thus J. J. Herzog, "RE. f. prot. Theol. u. K.," $1^2$, p. 39. Previously he had declared: "As a matter of fact the literal interpretation involves the whole Catholic theory [of Transubstantiation] and practice concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, not only the change in the elements, the adoration of the Host, and the withholding of the Chalice [?], but also the sacrificial character of the Mass."—The complete change of substance and the presence of Christ without any remaining of the bread, as is well known, is vouched for by the oldest liturgies. It is supported by the Fathers of the Church, who compare the change here with that of the water made into wine at Cana and by reference to the marvels of the Creation and of the Incarnation. Moreover, in 1543, Luther did not regard a belief in Transubstantiation as any obstacle to joining his party ("*nihil morati si quis eam alibi credat vel non*"). To the Evangelicals at Venice, June 13, 1543, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 568.

Behind the efforts to unite Wittenberg and Zürich there was a different influence at work. Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, like Zwingli, was anxious to establish a league of all the Swiss and German Protestants against those who, in the Empire, defended Catholicism. This proposal Luther resisted with all his might, urging the Landgrave not to make common cause with the false teachers, to the delight of the devil. Melanchthon, who also was present, was likewise pleased to see the Landgrave's plan frustrated, for it would have rendered impossible any reconciliation with the Emperor and the larger portion of the Empire, which was the vague ideal after which he was striving. The parties, however, were too distrustful of each other to arrive at any settlement. Jonas, for his diplomacy, called Bucer a "fox," and said of Zwingli, that he detected in him a certain arrogance such as was to be expected in a boor.

At the time of the Marburg Conference, Vienna was being besieged by the Turks. Thus, whilst the Empire stood in the greatest peril from foes without, an attempt was being made within to reach a settlement which might drive the wedge yet deeper into the unity of the Fatherland. The latter attempt ended, however, in failure, whilst the siege of Vienna was raised and the departure of the Turks brought about a certain strengthening of the Empire.

The tension between the Zwinglians and the Lutherans was not lessened when each party claimed that it had gained the upper hand and utterly routed the other at Marburg.

On October 11, 1531, Zwingli fell in the battle of Cappel, in which, mounted on horseback and fully armed, he was leading the men of Zürich against the five Catholic cantons. What Luther thought and felt at that time we learn both from Schlaginhaufen's Notes of his Table-Talk in 1531 and 1532, which afford some fresh information, and from Luther's letters and printed works.

The very first Note we have of Schlaginhaufen's touches upon Zwingli's untimely end. It would appear that a rumour had got abroad that Luther's other opponents, Carlstadt and Pellicanus, had also been slain.

Luther was in high glee when news of Zwingli's death reached him.

He said: "God knows the thoughts of the heart. It is well that Zwingli, Carlstadt, and Pellicanus lie dead on the battle-field, for otherwise we could not have retained the Landgrave, Strasburg and other of our neighbours [true to our doctrine]. Oh, what a triumph is this, that they have perished! God indeed knows His business well."[1]—"Zwingli died like a brigand," he said later, when scarcely a year had elapsed since his death. "He wished to force others to accept his errors, went to war, and was slain." "He drew the sword, therefore he has received his reward, for Christ says: 'All who take the sword shall perish by the sword.' If God has saved him, then He did so contrary to His ordinary ways."[2]—"All seek to cloak their deceitful doctrines with the name of the Evangel," so he exclaims in 1532. From Augsburg he heard that the Sacramentarian (i.e. Zwinglian) preachers were using his name and Melanchthon's. "Since they refused to be our friends in God's name, let them be so in the devil's, even as Judas was the friend of Christ."[3]

Because Thomas Münzer was no friend of the Evangel he was, according to Luther, destined to perish miserably and shamefully. Zwingli he placed on exactly the same footing; his death likewise was a just judgment.[4] Zwingli, so he will have it, was a complete unbeliever. In his newly published sermons of 1530 he had shown that Zwingli, like Carlstadt, by his attacks on the Supper, had denied all the articles of the faith. "If a man falls away from one article of faith, however insignificant it may appear to reason, he has fallen away from all and does not hold any of them aright. For instance, it is certain that our fanatics who now deny the Sacrament, also deny Christ's Divinity and all the other articles of faith, however much they protest to the contrary, and the reason of this is, that, when even one link of the chain is broken, the whole chain is in pieces."[5]

H. Barge, a Protestant, remarks: "After the battle of Cappel, Luther appears to have devoted his unusual gifts of eloquence to slandering Zwingli and all who remained true to him, systematically, deliberately, and maliciously, as mere heretics."[6]

The following delineation of Zwingli by Luther dates from 1538: "Zwingli was a very clever and upright man, but he fell [into error]; then he became so presumptuous as to dare to say and write: 'I hold that no one in the world ever believed that the Body and Blood of Christ are present in the Sacrament.'" Luther adds: Because Zwingli ventured to speak rashly against him [Luther] and "against what is plain to the whole world, he perished miserably, just as did Egranus, that importunate fellow."[7]

Just as he had condemned Carlstadt and Pellicanus, and,

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[4] "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 139.
[5] "Werke," Weim. ed., 32, p. 59.
[6] "Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt," 2, p. 445.
[7] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 136.

lastly, Egranus (Johann Silvius Egranus of Zwickau), so also elsewhere he lumps together in one condemnation with Zwingli all those doctors who differed from him. Relentlessly he scourges them as he had scourged the Catholics. "The character of those who oppose the Word is fiendish rather than human. Man does what he can, but when the devil takes possession of him then 'enmity arises between him and the woman'" (Gen. iii. 15).[1]

Few experienced his intolerance to such an extent as Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt, his quondam colleague in the theological faculty of Wittenberg.

### 2. Carlstadt

Carlstadt, the fanatic, failed to obtain any peace from Luther until he passed over to the camp of the Swiss theologians. In 1534 he became preacher at St. Peter's in Basle, and professor of theology. We may here cast a glance at the troubles brought on him, partly through Luther, partly through his own passionate exaltation, both previous to this date and until his death at Basle, where he was carried off by the plague in 1541.

Carlstadt's violent doings at Wittenberg and the iconoclasm which he justified by the Mosaic prohibition of graven images, had miscarried owing to Luther's warnings.[2] Soon it became clear that there was no longer any room for him at the University town near the leader of the Reformation, more particularly since, in 1522, he had seen fit to deny the presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Luther loudly bewailed Carlstadt's sudden determination to become a new teacher, and to lay new injunctions on the people to the detriment of his (Luther's) authority.[3]

Carlstadt now migrated to Orlamünde in the Saxon Electorate, where the magistrates appointed him pastor. In August, 1524, however, Luther passed through Weimar, Jena, and the other districts where the fanatics had gained a footing, preaching energetically against them. Carlstadt he had met at Jena on August 22, 1523, in the Black Bear Inn. In vain did they seek a friendly settlement, for each overwhelmed the other with reproaches. Finally, in the taproom of the inn, Luther handed his opponent a gold-

[1] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 56.

[2] See vol. ii., p. 97 ff.

[3] To Prior Caspar Güttel, March 30, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 326. Cp. Karl Müller, "Luther und Karlstadt," 1907 (with a discussion of G. Barge's "Andreas Bodenstein v. Karlstadt"), and "Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther," 1910.

gulden as a pledge that he was at liberty to write against him without reserve and that he did not mind in the least: "Take it and attack me like a man, don't fear!"[1] Shortly after, however, he complained of the treatment he had received: "At the inn at Jena . . . he turned upon me and abused me, snapped his fingers at me and said: 'I don't care that for you.' But if he does not respect me, whom, then, amongst us does he respect?"[2]

The struggle continued after they had gone their ways, both seeking to secure the favour of the Court. Luther, through the agency of Prince Johann Frederick, proposed that Carlstadt should be hounded from his place of refuge and from the whole upper valley of the Saale. Ultimately the disturber of the peace was banished from the Electorate; Luther, in his work "Widder die hymelischen Propheten," approved of his expulsion, roughly declaring that, so far as lay in him, Carlstadt would never again set foot in the country.[3] The homeless man now betook himself to Strasburg, whither he was pursued by a furious letter of Luther's, directed against him and his teaching, entitled "An die Christen zu Straspurg widder den Schwermer Geyst."

Luther became greatly enraged when he perceived that the denial of the Sacrament, already widespread in Switzerland, was also gaining ground at Strasburg and was being adopted by Capito and Bucer. In his excitement, in the hope of checking the falling away from his doctrine, of closing the mouth of that "fiend" Carlstadt—who likewise stood for the denial of the Sacrament—and of preventing "the overthrow of all political and ecclesiastical order," he

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 340; Erl. ed., 64, p. 394 f., from the "Report" on their meeting.

[2] "Widder die hymelischen Propheten," "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 89; Erl. ed., 29, p. 165.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 86=162: He points out why Andrew Carlstadt, "so far as my prayers may avail, shall not be permitted to come in again, but shall again depart should he secure admittance, unless he becomes a new Andrew, to which may God help him." He had not interpreted the law of Moses aright nor applied it to the authorities, but to the common people. The authorities ought to forbid the country to such preachers as did not teach quietly but drew the mob to them, pulled down images and destroyed churches at their pleasure behind the backs of the authorities. Carlstadt's spirit and that of his followers was a "spirit of murder and revolt." Here he does not refer to the difference on the doctrine of the Sacrament. Cp. Karl Müller, "Luther und Karlstadt," pp. 175–178. For the circumstances attending his banishment, see below, p. 391 f.

penned, in the course of a few weeks, a violent screed entitled, "Widder die hymelischen Propheten." The knowledge that everywhere revolt "was being associated with the Lutheran doctrines and reforms"[1] roused his terrible eloquence, of which the principal aim was to annihilate Carlstadt. Having completed the first part, comprising seventy pages of print in the Erlangen edition, he rushed this through the press as a preliminary instalment, informing his readers at the end that "the remainder will follow on foot."[2] As good as his word, three weeks later, he had ready the conclusion, consisting of nearly one hundred pages of print. He asserts that Carlstadt had, "for three years, been making a hash" of his books; he was even anxious to throw them all overboard. Luther's strongest argument against him was the revolutionary peril which this man represented. Even if he did not actually plot "murder and revolt," he writes, "yet I must say that he has a murderous and revolutionary spirit. . . . Because he carries a dagger, I do not trust him; he might well be simply awaiting a good opportunity to do what I apprehend. By the dagger I mean his false interpretation and understanding of the Law of Moses."[3] "What is the use of admonishing him?" he writes, alluding to Carlstadt's departure from the Lutheran interpretation of the Bible and his obstinacy in accepting no exegesis but his own; "I believe that he still considers me one of the most learned men at Wittenberg and yet he tells me to my very face, that I am of no account, though all the while he pretends to be quite willing to be instructed."[4]

From Strasburg, Carlstadt, the restless wanderer, had gone to Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber, a hotbed of Anabaptists. It was whilst here, that finding himself in dire want, he besought Luther's aid, at a time when the latter had not yet finished the above writing against him; he, however, frustrated all hopes of any reconciliation by previously penning a defence of his own doctrine of the Sacrament against the Wittenberg professor. The unfortunate termination of the Peasant War exposed him to grave danger,

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 676.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 125; Erl. ed., 29, p. 205. The first part was in print at the end of 1524, the second part about the end of January, 1525. Köstlin-Kawerau, p. 685.

[3] "Werke," *ibid.*, pp. 88, 213=165, 296. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 89=165, 166.

owing to the sympathy he was generally believed to have displayed for the rebels. He was accordingly compelled to seek Luther's good offices. In compliance with Luther's requirements, he agreed no longer to defend his own teaching, concerning the Sacrament as a thesis, but merely as an opinion; he also promised the Elector in writing henceforth neither to preach nor to write in favour of his views, but "to hold his tongue and support himself by his work."[1] Peace was now finally secured between Luther and his "submissive and obedient slave," as Carlstadt styles himself, greatly to the satisfaction of the former.[2] Thanks to Luther's intercession at Court, the fugitive was allowed to return to the country, but, as for his part in the Anabaptist disturbances, this was, as Luther insisted. to be judged upon "according to established law." Carlstadt even lay in hiding for a while at Luther's house.[3] After this he lived for some three years at Kamberg, earning a poor living by tilling the soil and keeping a small grocer's shop.

When he broke his promise to keep silence, and again renewed his complaints concerning Luther, and bewailed his own reduced circumstances, dissensions broke out afresh between them. Luther, who was greatly vexed, was very anxious to find some new means of muzzling his opponent. He proposed that he should in no case advocate in the presence of others his own theological opinions or his private interpretation of the Bible, though he might cherish them as his private convictions, for of the heart no man is judge; doctrines which differed from his own, so Luther declared, were not to be defended publicly, else they would come under the cognisance of the authorities. Under these circumstances Carlstadt thought it better to depart. In the beginning of 1529 he escaped, and, in 1530, found a home in Switzerland, where he enjoyed a quieter life and was free to proceed with his theological labours. "Luther, like Carlstadt, never doubted for a moment that his doctrine was

[1] Luther to the Elector of Saxony, September 12, 1525, "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, p. 327 ("Briefwechsel," 5, p. 240).

[2] Carlstadt to Luther, previous to September 12, 1525, "Briefwechsel Luthers," 5, p. 239: "*Fui olim frater (tuus) fortasse non nimium commodus sed posthac mancipium ero et obsequibile et suspiciens.*" He describes to Luther the poverty to which he, with his wife and child, were reduced.

[3] See passage from Alberus, in Enders, "Briefwechsel," *ibid.*, p. 240, n. 1.

really founded on Scripture. Hence Luther and the Elector felt themselves bound in conscience to defend as best they could the Christian faith and their country against any invasion of false doctrine." Such is the considered judgment of a Protestant historian.[1]

For the period subsequent to 1534, when Carlstadt at length began to lead a more tranquil life as professor and preacher at Basle, the Table-Talk is the principal source of information concerning Luther's relations with him.

Luther, in his conversations, frequently referred to his former friend, particularly in 1538.

"He, like Bucer, greatly retarded the progress of the Evangel by his arrogance. In other matters pride of intellect is not so dangerous, but in theology it is utterly pestilential to desire to arrogate anything to oneself. . . . Hence I was greatly troubled when Carlstadt once remarked to me: 'I am as fond of honour as any other man.' At Leipzig he refused to concede me the first place at the Disputation lest I should rob him of his part of the praise. And yet I was always glad to do him a favour. But he reaped shame instead of honour at Leipzig, for no worse disputant could be imagined than a man of so dull and wretched a spirit. . . . At first he, like Peter Lupinus, withstood me, but when I rebutted them with Augustine, they, too, studied Augustine and then insisted upon my doctrine more than I did myself. Carlstadt, however, was deceived by his arrogance."[2] Indeed, Carlstadt belonged to the category of the "*arrogantissimi.*"[3]

Elsewhere Luther again says similar things without noticing, so it would seem, that others might have complained of his "arrogance" just as much as he did of Carlstadt's. Carlstadt is "full of presumption," and this "brought about his fall as it did that of Münzer, Zwingli, Œcolampadius, Stiefel, and Eisleben." "Such people, weak and untried though they be, are puffed up with self-sufficiency before the victory, whereas I have my daily struggles." Before this Luther had declared that he was "plagued and vexed by the devil, whose bones are strong until we crack them."[4]—"It was impossible to make of Carlstadt a humble man because he had been through no real mental temptations."[5]—"He, like Münzer and Zwingli, was rash when good fortune attended him, but an arrant coward in misfortune";[6] Luther here was probably recalling how Carlstadt, the unhappy married priest, had been forced to humble himself before him

[1] K. Müller, "Luther und Karlstadt," p. 194.
[2] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 190.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 161.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[5] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 88.
[6] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 124.

owing to the dire want and danger in which he and his family found themselves.

"Had not Carlstadt come on the scene with the fanatics, Münzer and the Anabaptists, all would have gone well with my undertaking. But though I alone lifted it out of the gutter, they wished to seize upon the prize and poach upon my preserves, though, owing to the way they went about the business, they were really working for the Pope though all the while anxious to destroy him."[1]

Luther afterwards held fast to the opinion concerning his enemy which he had expressed long before in a letter to Spalatin: "Carlstadt has now been delivered over to a reprobate spirit so that I despair of his return. He always was, and probably always will be, unmindful of the glory of Christ; his insensate ambition has brought him to this. To me, nay, to us, he is more troublesome than any foe, so that I believe the unhappy man to be possessed by more than one devil. God have mercy on his sin, so far as it is mortal."[2]

In 1541 the news of his rival's death reached him. It was rumoured that he had died impenitent, that the devil had appeared at his death-bed, had fetched him away, and continued to make a great noise in his house.[3] Luther believed these tales. It was not surprising, so he said, that Carlstadt had at last received his deserts,[4] though he was sorry he should have died impenitent.[5]

It only remains to glance at the arguments Luther brought forward and at the theoretical attitude he assumed with regard to Carlstadt and his followers. If we take the book "Widder die hymelischen Propheten" and the writing he addressed to the Strasburg Christians against the fanatics, and consider the answers and objections they drew forth, we shall have a strange picture of Luther's ways of reasoning and of his crooked lines of thought. Not that his ability and eloquence failed him, but, for clearness and coherence, his doctrine and whole conduct leave everything to be desired. In his book he attacks not Carlstadt alone, but, as he says: "Carlstadt and his spirits," i.e. all those opponents of his whom he was pleased to dub "fanatics."

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 37.

[2] On September 13, 1524, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 23.

[3] To Jacob Probst, March 26, 1542, "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 452.

[4] To Amsdorf, April 13, 1542, *ibid.*, p. 463.

[5] To Probst, as above.

"Fanaticism" to him means not merely that fanciful interpretation of the Bible based on special illumination, to which his opponents were attached, but more particularly the threefold error for which they stood, viz. their denial of the Sacrament (i.e. of the Real Presence of Christ in the Supper), their iconoclasm, and, thirdly, their repudiation of infant baptism. As for the various elements of good, which, in spite of all their mistakes, were shared by the earlier Anabaptists, Luther refused categorically to see them or to hearken to the fanatics' well-grounded remonstrances against certain of his propositions.

To preach, a man must be called by God, so he lays it down. Had your spirit "been the true one, it would have manifested itself by word and sign; but in reality it is a murderous, secret devil."[1] Luther demands miracles with as much confidence as though he himself could point to them in plenty.

Those preachers who ventured to differ from him, he invites, at the very least, to point to their ecclesiastical vocation. But what sort of a vocation was this to be, they asked. As Luther recognised no universal Church visible, a call emanating from a congregation of believers had to suffice; Carlstadt, for instance, could appeal to his having been chosen by Orlamünde as its pastor. This Luther would not allow: You must also have the consent of the Elector and of the University of Wittenberg. Carlstadt and those who felt with him were well aware, that, in the final instance, this simply meant Luther's own consent, for at the University he was all-powerful, whilst the sovereign likewise was wont to be guided by him. Why, Carlstadt might also have asked, should not the degree of Doctor of Divinity suffice in my case, seeing that you yourself have solemnly pleaded your degree as a sufficient justification for assailing the common tradition of Christendom?

Luther's final answer to such an appeal was as follows: "My devil, I know you well."[2]

He was determined to hound out of his last hiding-place his presumptuous rival, many of whose doctrines, it must be admitted, were both mistaken and dangerous. Hence the measure which he induced the Elector to take in 1524,

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 213; Erl. ed., 29, 296.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 134=206.

according to which Carlstadt was to be refused shelter throughout the Electorate; this example was also followed by the magistrates of Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber, who, by an edict of January 27, 1525, commanded all burghers by virtue of their oath and fealty "not to house, shelter, or hide, provide with food and drink, or further on his way the said Dr. Carlstadt," adding, that a similar prohibition had been published in "other lordships and Imperial cities both near and far."[1]

When seeking to retain the support of the burghers of Strasburg, Luther had made a display of broadminded forbearance and charity. What he then said is often quoted by his followers as proof of his kindliness and humility. "Take heed that you show brotherly charity towards one another in very deed." "I am not your preacher. No one is bound to believe me, let each one look to himself. To warn all I am able, but stop any man I cannot." Yet he continues: "Carlstadt makes a great fuss about outward things as though Christianity consisted in knocking down images, overthrowing the Sacrament, and preventing Baptism; by the dust he raises he seeks to darken the sun, and the brightness of the Evangel, and the main facts of Christian faith and practice, so that the world may forget all that has hitherto been taught by us."[2] Luther's own doctrine, in spite of his preliminary assurance, was alone to stand, because, forsooth, it reveals the true sun to the world.

What, however, had he to oppose to the "knocking down of images" and the "overthrow of the Sacrament"? Did his standpoint afford sufficient resistance, or was it more than a mere subterfuge?

The pulling down of images and the overthrow of the Sacrament, Luther tells Carlstadt, agreeably with his own feelings at that time, may be introduced little by little, but must not be made into a law. Everyone is free to put away his images, to deny the Sacrament, or to refuse to receive it; let him follow his own conscience as it is the right and duty of every man to do. Luther, however, is forgetful of the restrictions he was in the habit of placing upon Catholic practices, of how he refused to admit the rights of conscience

[1] In "Thomas Zweifels Rothenburg im Bauernkrieg," ed. Baumann ("Bibl. des Litt. Vereins in Stuttgart," 139), p. 20.

[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 53, pp. 271, 273.

in the matter of the Mass and the religious life, notwithstanding that Catholics could appeal to the age-long practice of the Church in every land, and of his denial of the existence or even of the possibility of good faith amongst any of his opponents, whether within or without his own fold. In his book against the "Heavenly Prophets" he declares it to be "optional to wear a cowl or the tonsure . . . in this there is neither commandment nor prohibition," "to wear the tonsure, to put on albs and chasubles, etc. is a thing God has neither commanded nor forbidden." "Doctrine, command, and compulsion are not to be tolerated."[1] Here we see the confused after-effects of his old, pseudo-mystic conception of a religion of freedom, involving no duty of submission to any external authority in the matter of "doctrine or command." (See p. 8 ff.)

Granting that any real tolerance underlay these statements, the fanatics could ask: "Why, then, not include our peculiarities, for instance, our penitential dress, our grey frock, and outward, pious practices?" Luther, however, will hear of no self-chosen works of penance, and condemns indiscriminately those of the fanatics and the more measured ones preferred by Catholics, in spite of mortification being recommended by the example of the saints both of the Old and the New Covenant and of Christ Himself. Of the last Luther says quite openly that Christ's example taught us nothing; not Christ's works, but merely His express words were to be our example. "What He wished us to do or leave undone, that He not only did or left undone but also enjoined or forbade in so many words. . . . Hence we admit no example, not even that of Christ Himself."[2] Elsewhere he also excludes the Evangelical Counsels of Perfection, although they are not only based on example, but are also expressed in words. Yet here, in a particular instance, he departs from his theory that only Christ's express injunctions are binding; Carlstadt had done away with the elevation of the Sacrament in Divine Worship; this Luther disapproved of; he acknowledges, however, that Christ did not do so at the Last Supper, though *we* do. —He does not tell us when or how Christ enjoined this by "word."

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 112 ff.; Erl. ed., p. 29, p. 190 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 114=193.

What the motives were which led to his decisions on such usages we see from the following. Speaking to Carlstadt's party he says: "Although I too had the intention of doing away with the Elevation, yet, now, the better to defy and oppose for a while the fanatical spirit, I shall not do so."[1] In the same way, "in defiance of the spirit of the mob, he intends to call the Sacrament a Sacrifice, though it is not really one, but simply the reception of what was once a sacrifice." We cannot wonder if the sectarians looked upon this spirit of defiance and contradiction as something strange. One of them during this controversy complained with some justice that Luther, according to his own admission, had thundered forth many of his theses merely because the Papists "had pressed him so hard," and not from any inner conviction.[2] Contradiction was to him sufficient reason for narrowing the freedom of others in the matter of doctrine.

The new Christian freedom Luther vindicates in his book "Widder die hymelischen Propheten," more particularly in respect of the Old Testament Commandments. At that time, strange to say, the fanatics were set on imposing certain of the Mosaic laws on both public and ecclesiastical life, under the impression that they were precepts divinely ordained for all time. For this Luther's own violent and one-sided interpretation of the Bible, in defiance of all tradition, was really responsible; indeed, he himself was not disinclined to lay undue stress on Mosaism. (See vol. v., xxix., xxxv. 6.)

The fanatics' exaggerations were, however, too much for Luther. In his efforts to oppose their trend he goes so far as to include even the Decalogue, when he exclaims: "Don't bother us with Moses"; the Ten Commandments are disfigured with Mosaism, so he says, for they prescribe the Sabbath and forbid images; it was stupid to see in the Decalogue nothing more than moral commandments and precepts of the natural law.[3] Not on account of this law do we observe the weekly day of rest, but because we need a rest and regular times for Divine worship, viz. out of love for our neighbour and from necessity. It is no easy matter to reconcile this with Luther's own praiseworthy practice of

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 116; Erl. ed., 29, p. 194.
[2] Ickelsamer, "Clag," etc. (ed. Enders, "Neudrucke," No. 118, 1893). Cp. for instance "Werke," Erl. ed., 24, p. 209; 53, p. 274.
[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 687.

teaching the Commandments and seeing that the young were instructed in them, or with the great respect with which he surrounded the Decalogue. The Church's view, as expounded by St. Thomas, was both better and more logical, viz. that the Ten Commandments were the primary and common precepts of the law of nature,[1] and that the alteration in the third Commandment, introduced by the Church concerning the day (Sunday in place of the Sabbath), was merely a minor detail not affecting the real substance of the Commandment.

That, however, the Sunday, instead of the Saturday, was to be observed as holy was a point on which Luther had perforce to content himself with that very tradition which he had so often abused.

Tradition likewise was his only authority for defending Infant Baptism with so much determination against the fanatics. It is true, that, in order to deprive his opponents of their chief argument, he put forth the strange theory, treated of elsewhere, that infants are able to believe.[2] Elsewhere, too, he seeks to persuade himself, in spite of all difficulties, that infants in some way or other co-operate in the baptismal work of justification by means of some sort of faith.

On the other hand, he confutes Carlstadt's opinion as to the figurative sense of the Eucharistic words of consecration in a masterly dissertation on their real meaning. Here he holds the field because his interpretation is conformable both with that of antiquity and with the dictates of reason. We find him demolishing Carlstadt's stupidities by appeals to reason, but here Luther is in contradiction with himself, for in another part of the book, where, for his purpose, it was essential to make out reason to be absolutely blind as regards doctrine, he has the strongest invectives against it or any use of reason in matters of faith. In the case of Carlstadt's objections against the Sacramental Presence of Christ, he had been obliged to have recourse to proofs based on reason, yet in the other passage he says: "As if we did not know that reason is the devil's handmaid and does nothing but blaspheme and dishonour all that God says or

[1] "Summa theol.," 1–2, q. C. a. 3.

[2] In a letter to Spalatin as early as May 29, 1522, "Briefwechsel," 3, p. 377.

does."[1] To come to him with such a Frau Hulda (the name by which he ridicules reason) "is mere devil's roguery."[2] In his contempt for reason he goes so far as to advocate a new theory of the omnipresence of Christ's body, in heaven and everywhere on earth, in spite of the impossibility such a thing would involve.

It was quite at variance with his habitual exhortations and commands for him calmly to inform the fanatics that, whoever does not wish to receive the Sacrament may leave it alone. The only effect of receiving the Sacrament now appears to him to be, that it strengthens in us the Word of faith in Christ, and is a consolation to troubled consciences. It is true that he proves himself a fiery advocate of the literal sense of the words of institution and a passionate defender of the Sacramental Presence, yet the meagre effect he concedes to the Eucharist makes his fervour somewhat difficult to understand, for there is no doubt that he minimises both the graces we receive through the Sacrament and the greatness of the gift of Christ; apart from this he altogether excludes the sacrificial character of the Supper. Still, his zeal for the defence of the Eucharist against those who denied it was so great, that, out of defiance, he was anxious to retain even the Latin wording of his "Liturgy" and, to this end, made a pathetic appeal to the chapter in which St. Paul speaks of the use of strange tongues (1 Cor. xiv.), which Luther thought might be understood of the language used in the Mass.

The list of feeble arguments and self-contradictions found in this remarkable book might be indefinitely lengthened, though, on the other hand, it also contains many a practical and striking refutation of views held by the fanatics.

In the press of his personal struggle, and in spite of all his scorn for his opponents' "spiritism," Luther could not refrain from bringing forward against Carlstadt a prophecy of the "higher spirit." This prophecy had condemned Carlstadt beforehand and had foretold that he would not long share our faith; this has now been fulfilled to the letter, so that "I cannot but understand it."[3] Unfortunately, before this, the opposite party had discovered a

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 164; Erl. ed., 29, p. 241.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 182 f. = 261.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 115; Erl. ed., 29, p. 194.

prediction against Luther, an "ancient prophecy" which was certainly about to be fulfilled in Luther, viz. "that the black monk must first come and cause all mischief."[1]

As was to be expected, Luther preferred, however, to lay greater stress on other considerations which might assist him to gain the upper hand. He returns to his favourite asseveration: "If what I have begun is of God, no one will be able to hinder it; if it is not, I shall most assuredly not uphold it."[2] But not to "uphold it" with all the force and passion at his command, was, as a matter of fact, impossible to him. "No one shall take it from me!" he exclaims, almost in the same breath with the above, and though he indeed adds "save God alone," still he knew perfectly well that God would not appear personally in order to wrestle with him. Moreover, he will have it that the crucial test had occurred long before and had entirely vindicated him. So great a work as he had achieved could not, he assures us, have been "built" without God's help; not he but a higher power was the builder, though, so far as he was concerned, he had "in the main laboured well and rightly [this to the Strasburg dissenters],[3] so that whoever avers the contrary cannot be a good spirit; I hope I shall have no worse luck in the outward matters upon which these prophets are so fond of harping." In "outward matters," however, he was cautious enough to restrict his claim within his favourite province of freedom. He calls it "spiritual freedom," not to make iconoclasm a duty, to leave each one at liberty to receive, or not receive, the Sacrament, and not to insist on the wearing of grey frocks. He is also careful not to prescribe anything, that, by way of outward observances they may not fall back into Popery, the whole essence of which consists in this sort of thing.

Luther, however, insists all the more on the "Bible spirit," the spirit of the outward Word.

This, in spite of its subjective character, is to be set up as a brazen shield against the private judgment of the "heavenly prophets" and their inspirations. It is true his opponents objected that he himself had much to learn from the "Bible spirit," for instance, greater meekness and a

[1] Ickelsamer, "Neudrucke," p. 53. For the Prophecy see above, p. 165 f.

[2] "Werke," Weim. ed., 18, p. 134; Erl. ed., 29, p. 205.

[3] *Ibid.*, 15, p. 394=53, p. 274.

resolution to proceed without stirring up "dangerous enmities." These, however, were minor matters in his eyes. For him the "Bible spirit" was the witness and safeguard of his treasured doctrine.

What we must hearken to is not the inward Word—such is his emphatic declaration after his encounter with the fanatics, in flat contradiction to his earlier statements (see above, p. 4 f.)—but above all the outward Word contained in Scripture: if we do otherwise we are simply following the example of the "heavenly prophets." The Pope "spoke according to his own fancy," paying no heed to the outward Word, but I speak according to Scripture.[1] All that was necessary was not to pervert the Bible, as the fanatics did; it is the devil who gives them a wrong understanding of Scripture, indeed, according to Luther, there is no heretic who does not make much of Scripture. "When the devil sees that the Bible is used as a weapon against him, he runs to Scripture and raises such confusion that people no longer can tell who has the right interpretation. When I quote Scripture against the Papists and fanatics, they don't believe me, for they have their own glosses."[2] Hence, such at least is his implicit invitation, they must hold fast to his gloss and no other. For I, by discovering Scripture, "have delivered the world from the horrid darkness of Antichrist; nor have I the faintest doubt, but am entirely convinced, that our Evangel is the true one."[3] "The heresies and persecutions rampant amongst us are merely that confirmation of the truth which the New Testament predicted (1 Cor. xi. 19), of the truth which I preach. Heresies must needs arise," etc. etc.

Finally—such is one of his main arguments against the "heavenly prophets"—these heretical fanatics do not preach the "chief piece of Christian doctrine"; they "do not tell people how to get rid of sin, obtain a good conscience, and a joyful heart at peace with God, which, really, is the great thing. Here, if anywhere, is the sign that their spirit is of the devil. . . . Of how we may obtain a good conscience they are utterly ignorant, for they have never experienced it."[4] He, on the other hand, thanks to his

[1] Sermon of 1528, "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 80.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 287.
[3] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 391; Erl. ed., 53, p. 271 f. ("An die Christen zu Straspurg").
[4] *Ibid.*, 18, p. 214=29, p. 297.

doctrine, had, though with unheard-of efforts, won his way to a quiet conscience, and by this impressed an infallible stamp upon his Evangel; his own way to salvation will be the way of all who trustfully lay hold on the merits of Christ. Yet it is not the way for all. For the proud, and for all who are full of self, there is the law to terrify them and lay bare their sin. It is only to the "troubled consciences" who tremble before the wrath of God, to the simple, the poor, and those who are utterly cast down, that the Evangel speaks. But these fanatics have no interior combats and death-struggles, they neither humble themselves before God, nor do they pray. "This I know and am certain of, that they never commenced their undertaking by imploring God's help, or praying, and that, even now, their conscience would not allow them to pray for a happy issue."[1] Not only do they not pray, but they are simply unable to pray; they are lost souls and belong to the devil.

Never let us in any single thing ever trust to our own knowledge and our own will. "I prefer to listen to another rather than to myself." We cannot be sufficiently on our guard "against the great rascal whom we bear in our hearts."[2] The fanatics retorted: Well may you speak thus, "you who soar aloft so high with your faith," you who are so full of yourself that you must needs use us as your target; "your defiant teaching and your obstinacy" are well known to all.[3]

Carlstadt and his fellows were not to be converted by such outpourings as these.

The rebellious fanatics treated the writings directed against them with the greatest contempt. Caspar Glatz, who had replaced Carlstadt as Lutheran pastor at Orlamünde, said in a report to Wittenberg: They use them in the privy, as I myself have seen and heard from others.[4] Luther, too, indignantly apprises Wenceslaus Link of this: "*Rustici nates libello meo purgant, sic Satan furit.* Thus doth Satan rage."[5]

[1] "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 396 f.=53, p. 276 f. ("An die Christen zu Straspurg").

[2] Sermon of March 25, 1528, "Werke," Weim. ed., 27, p. 76 *seq.*

[3] Ickelsamer, "Neudrucke," pp. 43, 44, 45.

[4] Glatz to Luther, January 18, 1525, in Enders, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 5, p. 107.

[5] To Link at Altenburg on February 7, 1525, "Briefwechsel," 5, p. 122.

The most important change called forth in Luther by his encounters with the fanatics was an increasing disinclination to appeal as heretofore to any extraordinary divine illumination or inspiration of his own. At the commencement of the conflict he had been in the habit of telling them: "I also was in the spirit, I also have seen spirits"; now, however, little by little, as we shall see more plainly later (vol. iv., xxviii. 1), such assurances made room for an appeal to the "Word." The outward Bible-Word, the meaning of which he had himself discovered, was now to count for everything.

Beneath the yoke of the Word he was anxious to compel also his other opponents, such as Agricola, Schenk, and Egranus, to pass.

### 3. Johann Agricola, Jacob Schenk, and Johann Egranus

Johann Agricola of Eisleben, one of the earliest and most violent of Luther's assistants, was desirous of carrying his doctrine on good works and the difference between the Law and the Gospel to its logical conclusion. His modifications and criticism of Luther's doctrine called forth the latter's vigorous denunciation. Agricola had to thank his own restlessness, and "the burden of Luther's superiority and hostility," for what he endured so long as Luther lived.[1] As the details of the quarrel are reserved for later consideration (vol. v., xxix. 3), we shall here merely indicate Luther's behaviour by quoting a few of his utterances.

"The foolish fellow was concerned about his honour," Luther says very characteristically of this quarrel. He was anxious "that the Wittenbergers should be nothing and Eisleben everything."[2] "He is hardened," and nothing can be done for him; "Agricola says, 'I, too, have a head.' Well, were that all that God requires, I might say I have one too. Thus they go on in their obstinacy and see not that they are in the wrong. . . . Our Lord God evidently intends to go on worrying me yet a while so as to defy the Papists."[3] Elsewhere he says: "Agricola looks on at these doings with a merry mien, and refuses to humble himself. Yet he has submitted his recantation to me, perhaps in the hope that I would treat him more leniently. But I shall seek the glory of Christ and not his; I shall pillory him and his words, as a cowardly, proud, impious man, who has done much harm to the Church."[4]

[1] Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 3, p. 376. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 372 ff.
[2] Förstemann, "Neues Urkundenbuch zur Gesch. der Reformation," 1, p. 322.
[3] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 119. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

Another who fell into serious disagreements with Luther over the Antinomian question was Dr. Jacob Schenk, then preacher at Freiberg in Saxony (afterwards Court-preacher at Weimar). At Wittenberg his conduct began to give rise to suspicion at the same time as Agricola's. He was reported to have said in a sermon : Whoever goes on preaching the law, is possessed of the devil. The eloquence of this man of no mean talents was as great as his aims were strange.

In Lauterbach's Diary we find the following, under date October 7, 1538, concerning Luther and Schenk : At Luther's table the conversation turned upon Jacob Schenk, " who, in his arrogant and lying fashion was doing all manner of things [so Luther declared] which he afterwards was wont to deny. Wherever he was, he raised up strife, relying on the authority of the Prince and the applause of the people. But he will be put to shame in the end [so Luther went on to say], just as Johann Agricola, who enjoyed great consideration at Court and was almost a Privy Councillor ; his reputation vanished without my having any hand in the matter. When Schenk preached at Zeitz he gave general dissatisfaction. The wretched man is puffed up with pride and deceives himself with new-fangled words. . . . He has concealed his wickedness under a Satanic hypocrisy and is ever aping me. Never shall I trust him again, no, not to all eternity."[1]

Lauterbach gives a striking picture of Luther's behaviour at his encounter with Jacob Schenk on September 11, 1538. Luther and Jonas, after a sermon which had greatly displeased them, paid him a visit. They found him, " sad to relate, impenitent and unabashed, rebellious, ambitious, and perjurious." Luther pointed out to him his ignorance ; how could he, unexperienced as he was, and understanding neither dialectics nor rhetoric, venture thus to oppose his teachers ? Schenk replied : " I must do so for the sake of Christ's Blood and His dear Passion ; my own great trouble of conscience also compels me to it " (thus adducing a motive similar to that so often alleged by Luther in his own case). I must " fear God more than all my preceptors ; for I have a God as much as you." Luther replied : " It may be that you understand my doctrine perfectly, but you ought nevertheless, for the honour of God, to honour us as the teachers who first instructed you." This seems to have made no impression on Schenk. Luther's parting shot was : " If you are torn to pieces, may the devil lap your blood. We also are ' in peril from false brethren.' Poor Freiberg [the scene of Schenk's labours] will never recover from this. But God, the Avenger, will destroy the man who has defiled His temple. The proverb says : ' Where heart and mind both are bad, the state of a man indeed is sad.' "

[1] Lauterbach, " Tagebuch," p. 143.

At supper, Schenk, seated at table with Luther and Jonas, began to abuse Luther and the inhabitants of Freiberg; after saying much that was scarcely complimentary, he added: "'When I have made the Court as pious as you have made the world, then my work will be finished.' In spite of all this impertinence he remained seated, though his hypocritical show of humility revealed how depraved his heart really was. When Luther got up to leave the room Schenk attempted to start the quarrel anew."[1] Finally they parted unreconciled.

Schenk subsequently led a wandering existence, ever under suspicion as to the purity of his faith. In 1541 he was at Leipzig and in 1543 he visited Joachim, Elector of Brandenburg. It was given out by adversaries, such as Melanchthon and Alberus, that he ultimately committed suicide, driven thereto by melancholy; the statement is, however, not otherwise confirmed.

Johann Wildenauer (or Silvius), the theologian, was born at Eger in Bohemia, and hence was generally known as Egranus. This priest, who was a man of talent and of Humanistic culture, and an enthusiastic follower of Erasmus, had been won over to the new teaching in the very beginning. After having been preacher at the Marienkirche at Zwickau until Thomas Münzer made any further stay impossible, we find him from 1521–23 and, again, from 1533–34, preacher of the new faith at Joachimstal, where he was one of the predecessors of Mathesius.

Wildenauer was one of the most remarkable and independent characters of the time, but an "extremely restless spirit."[2] Although a Lutheran, he openly expressed his dissatisfaction, not only with the moral conditions under Lutheranism, but also with many points of his master's doctrine, particularly with his theory that faith alone justifies, and that man cannot co-operate in the work of his salvation. Luther became at an early date suspicious and angry concerning him. He wrote to Joachimstal "to warn the people against the dubious doctrines of Egranus," as Mathesius relates, on the strength of copies of certain letters he had seen.[3] The more dutiful Mathesius speaks of his predecessor as "a Mameluke and an ungrateful pupil."[4]

[1] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 129.

[2] O. Clemen, "Johann Sylvius Egranus" ("Mitt. des Altertumsvereins für Zwickau und Umgegend," 1899, Hft. 6 and 7; Sonderabd., 1 and 2), 1, p. 28. [3] "Historien," p. 222. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

His fault consisted in his following the example of Erasmus, as did in progress of time so many other admirers of the Dutch scholar, and relinquishing more and more his former good opinion of Luther's person and work; with this change his own sad experiences had not a little to do. To the Catholic Church, which had excommunicated him, he apparently never returned. When, in 1534, he was deprived of his post at Joachimstal, he complained in a letter, that he had been "driven into exile and outlawed by Papists and Lutherans alike."[1]

In that same year he published at Leipzig a work entitled "A Christian Instruction on the righteousness of faith and on good works,"[2] which, in spite of its bitterness, contained many home-truths. There, apart from what he says on doctrinal matters, we find an account of the "temptations and trials" he had to endure for having ventured to teach that "good works and a Christian life, side by side with faith, are useful and necessary for securing eternal life."[3]

About this time Luther again sent forth a challenge to Erasmus and to all Erasmians generally who had broken with him, Egranus included.

He told his friends that now his business was to "purify the Church from the brood of Erasmus" ("*a fœtibus eius*"); he was referring particularly to Egranus, also to Crotus Rubeanus, Wicel, Œcolampadius, and Campanus.[4] Erasmus had already "seduced" Zwingli and now he had also "converted Egranus, who believes just as much as he," viz. nothing.[5]—Egranus he calls a "proud donkey," who teaches that Christ must not be exalted so high, having learnt this from Erasmus;[6] "this proud spirit declared that though Christ had earned it, yet we must merit it."[7]—He had long been acquainted with this false spirit, so he wrote in 1533 or 1534 to a Joachimstal burgher; he, like other sectarians, was full of "devil's venom." "Even though no syrup or purgative be given them, yet they cannot but expel their poison from mouth and anus. The time will come when they will be unable any longer to pass the matter, and then their belly must burst like that of Judas; for they will not be able to

[1] M. J. Weller, "Altes aus allen Teilen der Gesch.," Chemnitz, 1760 ff., 2, p. 783. Weller, 1, p. 177, gives one of Egranus's letters of 1523, in which he says: "*propter Lutherum neque evangelium neque Christum . . . nominare tutum est.*"

[2] Clemen, *ibid.*, 2, p. 11 f.

[3] Bl. A. 3a. Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 135.

[4] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 488.

[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 343 (in 1544).

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

retain what they have stolen and devoured of [the doctrine of] Christ."[1]

That Egranus finally drank himself to death with Malmsey "is a despicable calumny, which can be traced back to Mathesius."[2] In the sixteenth-century controversies it was the usual thing on either side to calumniate opponents and to make them die the worst death conceivable,[3] and it would appear, that, in the case of Egranus, at a very early date unfavourable reports were circulated concerning his manner of death. His lamentable end ("*misere periit*"), Luther likens to that of Zwingli, struck down in the battle of Cappel by a divine judgment.[4] His death occurred in 1535.

In the "Christian Instruction," referred to above, Egranus had written: "The new prophets can only tell us that we are freed from sin by Christ; what He commanded or forbade in the Gospel that they pass over as were it not in the Gospel at all." "If we simply say: Christ has done everything and what we do is of no account, then we are making too much of Christ's share, for we also must do something to secure our salvation. By such words Christ is made a cloak for our sins, and, as is actually now the case, all seek to conceal and excuse their wickedness and viciousness under the mantle of Christ's merits."

"If such faith without works continues to be preached much longer, the Christian religion will fall into ruins and come to a lamentable end, and the place where this faith without works is taught will become a Sodom and Gomorrha."[5]

### 4. Bugenhagen, Jonas and others

Disagreements such as these never arose to mar the relations between Luther and some of his other more intimate co-workers, for instance, his friendship with Bugenhagen and Jonas, who have been so frequently alluded to already. He was always ready to acknowledge in the warmest manner the great services they rendered him in the defence and spread of his teaching, and to support them when they stood in need of his assistance. He was never stingy in his bestowal of praise, narrow-minded or jealous, in his acknowledgement of the merits of friendly fellow-preachers, or of those writers who held Lutheran views.

[1] To Wolfgang Wiebel, "Werke," Erl. ed., 54, p. 208 ("Briefwechsel," 9, p. 367).

[2] Clemen, *ibid.*, p. 16, with a reference to Loesche's "Leben des Mathesius," 1, 1895, p. 88.

[3] Plentiful proofs in N. Paulus, "Luthers Lebensende," p. 1 ff.

[4] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 136.

[5] For these passages and some others, see Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 136 f. Cp. Clemen, *ibid.*, 2, p. 14.

Nicholas von Amsdorf, who introduced the new faith into Magdeburg in 1524 and there became Superintendent, he praises for the firmness with which he confessed the faith and for his fearless conduct generally. In Disputations he was wont to go straight to the heart of the matter like the "born theologian" he was; at Schmalkalden, when preaching before the Princes and magnates, he had not shrunk from declaring that our Evangel was intended for the weak and oppressed and for those who feel themselves sinners, though he could not discern any such in the audience.[1]

Johann Brenz, preacher in Schwäbisch-Hall since 1522, and one of the founders of the new church system in Suabia, was greatly lauded by Luther for his exegetical abilities. "He is a learned and reliable man. Amongst all the theologians of our day there is not one who knows how to interpret and handle Holy Scripture like Brenz. When I gaze in admiration at his spirit I almost despair of my own powers. Certainly none of our people can do what he has done in his exposition of the Gospel of St. John. At times, it is true, he is carried away by his own ideas, yet he sticks to the point and speaks conformably to the simplicity of God's Word."[2]

Next to Melanchthon, however, the friend whom Luther praised most highly as a "thoroughly learned and most able man," was Johann Bugenhagen. "He has, under most trying circumstances, been of service to many of the Churches."[3]

In his Preface to Bugenhagen's Latin Commentary on the Psalms—a work which, even in the opinion of Protestant theologians, "leaves much to be desired"[4] from the "point of view of learning," and which in reality is merely a sort of polemical work of edification, written from the standpoint of the new faith—Luther declared, that the spirit of Christ had at length unlocked the Psalter through Bugenhagen; every teacher must admit that now "the spirit was revealing secrets hidden

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 267.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 266 *seq.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 267.
[4] L. Diestel. Cp. "Luthers Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 2, where Diestel says: "His knowledge of Hebrew is meagre"; the literal sense is made subservient to the "Christian and theological bias." H. Hering's opinion ("Doctor Pomeranus," Leipzig, 1888) is: In Bugenhagen's Commentary "the Psalmist's states of soul are made to represent a picture of the Reformation"; the work is "sensibly clearer and more prosaic" than Luther's unfinished exposition of the Psalms.

for ages." "I venture to assert that the first person on earth to give an explanation of the Book of Psalms is Pomeranus. Almost all earlier writers have introduced their own views into the book, but here the judgment of the spirit will teach you wondrous things."[1]

Yet at the very outset, in the first verse of the Psalms, instead of a learned commentary, we find Bugenhagen expounding the new belief, and attacking the alleged self-righteousness of Catholicism, termed by him the "*cathedra pestilentiæ*"; he even relates at length his conversion to Lutheranism, which had given scandal "to those not yet enlightened by the sun of the Evangel."[2] They were no longer to wait for the completion of his own Commentary on the Psalms, Luther concludes, since now—in place of poor Luther—David, Isaias, Paul, and John were themselves speaking to the reader.

"He had no clear perception of the defects of Bugenhagen's exegetical method," remarks O. Albrecht, the editor of the above Preface in the Weimar edition of Luther's works.[3] The explanation of this "uncalled-for praise," as Albrecht terms it, is to be found in the feeling expressed by Luther in the first sentence of the Preface: At the present time God had caused His Word to shine like crystal, whereas of yore there prevailed only chill and dismal mists.

The truth is that few of Luther's assistants promoted his cause with such devotion and determination combined as did Pomeranus, who, for all his zeal, was both practical and sober in his ways. Such were his achievements for the cause, that Luther greets him in the superscription of a letter as "Bishop of the Church of Wittenberg, Legate of Christ's face and heart to Denmark, my brother and my master." He thus explains the words "*legatus a facie et a corde*": "the Pope boasts of his '*legati a latere*,' I boast of my pious preachers '*a facie et a corde*.'"[4] Luther was in the habit of putting Bugenhagen on the same footing with himself and Melanchthon: Luther, Philip, and Pomeranus will support the Evangel as long as they are there, he says, but after this there will come a fall ("*fiet lapsus*").[5] Let those braggarts who pretend they know better "come to me, to Philip, and to Pomeranus . . . then they will be nicely confounded."[6] Köstlin is, however, rightly of

[1] Reprint of Luther's *Praefatio* in "Werke," Weim. ed., 15, p. 8; "Opp. lat. var.," 7, p. 502 *seq.*

[2] First Wittenberg ed., 1524, at the commencement (Münchener Staatsbibl.).

[3] p. 2.

[4] Lauterbach, "Tagebuch," p. 3, according to which the letter, which has not been preserved, must have been dated January 2, 1538 (*illo die*).

[5] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 416, of 1537.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 412.

opinion that, as compared with Luther and Melanchthon, Bugenhagen was "merely a subordinate, though endowed by nature with considerable powers of mind and body."[1] Yet the sun of Luther's favour shone upon him. Agricola, "the poor fellow," says Luther, "looks down on Pomeranus, but the latter is a great theologian and has plenty nerve for his work ('*multum habet nervorum*'); Agricola, of course, would make himself out to be more learned than Master Philip or I."[2] "Pomeranus is a splendid professor"; "his sermons are full of wealth."[3] The truth is that the "wealth," or rather expansiveness, of his discourses was so great that Luther had to reprove him severely for the length of his sermons.

Johann Bugenhagen, called Pommer or Pomeranus because he hailed from Wollin in Pomerania, after two years spent at the University of Greifswald and a further course devoted mainly to Humanist studies, was ordained priest by the Bishop of Cammin, when "as yet he probably had not begun to study theology."[4] At the College at Treptow he earned respect as professor of Humanism and as Rector; in his desire to further the better theology advocated by Erasmus he took to studying the Bible, and, on Luther's appearance, was soon won over to the cause, though on first reading Luther's work "On the Babylonish Captivity," he "had been repelled by the palpable heresies" it contained. He settled at Wittenberg, delivered private lectures on the Psalms, and married, on October 13, 1522, a servant-maid of Hieronymus Schurf, the lawyer; in the following year he was inducted at the Schlosskirche as parish-priest of Wittenberg by the magistrates, acting together with Luther. In defiance of right and justice and of the murmurs raised, Luther, from the pulpit, proclaimed him pastor, thus overruling the objections of the Chapter; his choice by the board of magistrates "and by the congregation agreeably with the evangelical teaching of Paul," Luther held to be quite sufficient.[5]

As pastor, Bugenhagen displayed great energy not merely in preaching to and instructing the people, but in furthering in every way the spread of Lutheranism in the civic and

[1] "Allg. Deutsche Biographie," Art. "Bugenhagen."
[2] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 93 (May, 1540). [3] *Ibid.*, p. 381.
[4] H. Kawerau, "RE. für prot. Theol.," Art. "Bugenhagen."
[5] See also Köstlin-Kawerau, 1, p. 528, where the "contravention of the rights of the Chapter" is admitted.

social life of the Electorate. His practical talents made him eventually the apostle of the new Church, even beyond the confines of Saxony. He successively introduced or organised it in Brunswick, Hamburg, Lübeck, and in Pomerania, his own country; then in Denmark, from 1537–39, where he fixed his residence at Copenhagen. Two main features are apparent in all he did; everywhere the new Churches were established on a strictly civil basis, and, so far as the new religion allowed of it, the old Catholic forms were retained.

In his indefatigable and arduous undertakings Bugenhagen made himself one with Luther, and became, so to speak, a replica of his master. In his scrupulous observance of Luther's doctrine he was to be outdone by none, save possibly by Amsdorf; in rudeness and want of consideration where the new Evangel was concerned, and in his whole way of thinking, he stood nearest to Luther, the only difference being, that, in his discourses and writings we miss Luther's imagination and feeling. In the literary field, in addition to the Commentary on the Psalms and other similar writings, he distinguished himself by a work in vindication of the new preaching, addressed to the city of Hamburg and entitled: "Von dem Christen-loven und den rechten guden Werken" (1526), also by the share he took, with Melanchthon and Cruciger, in Luther's German translation of the Bible, and his labours in connection with the Low-Saxon version. Most important of all, however, were his Church-constitutions. Bugenhagen died at Wittenberg on April 20, 1558, after having already lost his sight—broken down by the bitter trials which had come on him subsequent to Luther's death.

Such was Luther's confidence in his friend and appreciation of his power, that, during Bugenhagen's prolonged absence, we often find Luther expressing his desire to see him again by his side and in charge of the Wittenberg pastorate. "Your absence," so in 1531 he wrote to him at Lübeck, "is greatly felt by us. I am overburdened with work and my health is not good. I am neglecting the Church-accounts, and the shepherd should be here. I cannot attend to it. The world remains the world and the devil is its God. . . . Since the world refuses to allow itself to be saved, let it perish. Greet your Eve and Sara in my name and that of my wife and give greetings to all our friends."[1]

When Bugenhagen was at Wittenberg Luther loved to open to him the secret recesses of his heart, especially when suffering

[1] To Bugenhagen, November 24, 1531, "Briefwechsel," 9, p. 127.

from "temptations." Frequently he even aroused in Bugenhagen a sort of echo of his own feelings, which shows us how close a tie existed between them, and gives us an idea of the kind of suggestion Luther was wont to exercise over those who surrendered themselves to his influence.

Bugenhagen, like Luther, was not conscious of any good-will or merit of his own, but—apart from the merits of Christ with which we are bedecked—merely of the oppression arising from his "great weakness" and "secret idolatry against the first Table of the Law of Moses." Hence, when Luther, in June, 1540, complained that Agricola was after some righteousness of his own, whereas he (Luther) could find nothing of the sort in himself, Bugenhagen at once chimed in with the assurance that he was no less unable to discover any such thing in himself.[1]

Luther's anger against the fanatics and Sacramentarians was imbibed by Bugenhagen. To him and his other Table-guests Luther complained that his adversaries, Carlstadt, Grickel and Jeckel (i.e. Agricola and Jacob Schenk), were ignorant braggarts; they accuse us of want of charity because we will not allow them to have their own way, though we read in Paul: "A man that is a heretic avoid." Bugenhagen was at once ready to propose a drastic remedy. "Doctor, we should do what is commanded in Deuteronomy [xiii. 5 ff.], where Moses says they should be put to death." Whereupon Luther replied: "Quite so, and the reason is given in the same text: It is better to make away with a man than with God."[2] Bugenhagen was also the first to take up his pen in Luther's defence[3] when the Swiss heresy concerning the doctrine of the Supper began to be noised abroad owing to a letter of Zwingli's to Alber at Reutlingen, and to his book, "*Commentarius de vera et falsa religione*," of March, 1525. When Melanchthon showed signs of inclining

[1] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 147 f. See above, p. 204.

[2] Mathesius, *ibid.*, p. 274.

[3] In the work called "*Contra novum errorem de sacramento corporis et sanguinis Iesu Christi*" (end of August, 1525). See "Luthers Werke," Weim. ed., 19, p. 447. Zwingli replied to Bugenhagen in a writing of October, 1525. In the "Klare Underrichtung vom Nachtmal Christi," which Zwingli published in February, 1526, in vindication of his denial of the Real Presence, he, as in his previous writings, avoided naming Luther. Since at Basle in September, 1525, Œcolampadius also advocated the figurative sense of the words of institution in his writing, "*De genuina verborum Domini expositione*," and Caspar Schwenckfeld and Valentine Krautwald sought to propagate the same in Silesia, while Carlstadt was winning adherents by his attacks upon the Sacrament, Bugenhagen's work was all the more timely. Johann Brenz espoused his cause, in opposition to the figurative interpretation, in his "Syngramma" of October, 1525, and so did Jacob Strauss. The "Sacramentarian" movement had grown before Luther followed up his vigorous refutation of Carlstadt's denial of the Sacrament (in his book "Widder die hymelischen Propheten," and in his sermon of 1526 on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ against the fanatics) by his polemical Tractate against Zwingli and Œcolampadius on the words of Christ, "This is My Body" (1527). See above, p. 379 f.

towards the Zwinglian doctrine of the Sacrament, there was soon a rumour at Wittenberg that "Melanchthon and Pomeranus have fallen out badly on the Article concerning the Supper," and an apprehension of "dreadful dissensions amongst the foremost theologians."[1]

In 1532 Luther declared: There must be some ready to show a "brave front" to the devil; "there must be some in the Church as ready to slap Satan, as we three [Luther, Melanchthon, and Bugenhagen]; but not all are able or willing to endure this."[2] And on another occasion he described, in Bugenhagen's presence, how he was wont cynically to mock the devil when "he comes by night to worry me . . . by bringing up my sins"; Satan did not, however, torment him about his really grave sins, such as his "celebration of Mass and provocation of God [in the religious life]." "May God preserve me from that! For were I to realise keenly how great these sins were, the horror of it would kill me!" It was on the occasion of this fantastic outburst, employed by Luther to quiet his conscience, that Bugenhagen, not to be outdone in coarseness, uttered the words already recorded (above, p. 178).[3]

The spiritual kinship between Luther and Bugenhagen produced in the latter a similar liking for coarse language. He was much addicted to the use of strong expressions, witness, for instance, his saying that friars wore ropes around their waists that we might have wherewith to hang them.[4]

In his most severe temptations Luther found consolation in the words of comfort spoken by the pastor of Wittenberg, and he assures us he was often refreshed by such exhortations, the memory of which he was slow to lose.[5] Bugenhagen assisted him during his severe illness in 1527, and again in the other attack some ten years later. On the latter occasion he summoned his friend to Gotha, made his confession to him, so he says, and commended the "Church and his family" to his care.[6] When separated they were in the habit of begging each other's prayers.

In his letters Bugenhagen recounts to Luther the success of his labours, in order to afford him pleasure, giving due thanks to God. Somewhat strange is the account he sent Luther of an encounter he had at Lübeck with a girl supposed to be possessed by the devil; through her lips the devil had given testimony to him just as at Ephesus, so the Acts of the Apostles

[1] Spengler to Veit Dietrich, in Mayer's "Spengleriana," p. 153. Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 2, p. 141.

[2] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 25. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[4] E. Hörigk, "Joh. Bugenhagen und die Protestantisierung Pommerns," Mainz, 1895, p. 19 f.

[5] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 299. Cp. p. 220. Cp. Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 10, where Luther relates how Bugenhagen calmed him when the devil almost choked him with the passage 1 Timothy v. 11, and drove him "from *gratia in disputationem legis*."

[6] Cp. Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 115.

tell us, he had borne witness to the power of Jesus and Paul.[1] Hardly had he come to the town and visited the girl than the devil, speaking through her, called him by name (we must not forget that her parents, at least, were acquainted with Bugenhagen) and declared his coming to Lübeck to be quite uncalled for. That, in spite of his prayers and tears, he was unable to expel the devil, he himself admits.[2] The account of the incident, written down by him soon after his arrival at Lübeck, and before he had properly inquired into the case, was soon published under a curious title.[3] So much did Luther think of the encounter with this hysterical or mentally deranged girl,[4] that he wrote: "Satan is giving Pomeranus a great deal to do at Lübeck with a maid who is possessed. The cunning demon is planning marvels." This, when forwarding from the Coburg to Wenceslaus Link, preacher at Nuremberg, the account he had received.[5] In 1536 Bugenhagen related at table, during the conciliation meetings held at Wittenberg, the encounters he had had in Lübeck and Brunswick with "delivered demoniacs."[6]

Luther on his side gave his friend, when busy abroad, frequent tidings of the state of things at Wittenberg. In 1537 he sent to him, at Copenhagen, an account of a nasty trick played by Paul Heintz, a professor at the University of Wittenberg, "greatly to the detriment of the town and University." The latter, in order to possess himself of an inheritance, had given out that a youthful stepson of his was dead, and had caused a dog to be solemnly buried in his place with all the usual rites. "The Master's drama makes me almost burst with rage." If these lawyers (who in Luther's opinion treated the case too leniently) "look upon the disgrace to our Church as a small matter," he writes, to Bugenhagen, "I will show them a bit of the true Luther ('*ero, Deo volente, Lutherus in hac causa*')."[7] He did actually write a furious letter to the Elector to secure the severe punishment of the offender, who has caused us "to be jeered at everywhere as dogs' undertakers"; the lawyers, who

[1] Bugenhagen to Luther, Jonas and Melanchthon (beginning of November, 1530), "Luthers Briefwechsel," 8, p. 304 ff.: "The words [of the devil] Acts xxix. [15] came to my mind: 'Jesus I know and Paul I know,' etc. He has often troubled me . . . I have not yet forgotten what he sought to do through the Sacramentarians of Silesia (see p. 409, n. 3). In the matter of other sins he may have seemed to triumph over me, but, thanks be to Christ, he may indeed have come to me, but has not been able to remain. I again exhort you herewith that you pray for me," etc. [2] In the letter, p. 307.

[3] "Zwo wunderbarliche Hystorien zu Bestettigung der Lere des Evangelii, Johann Pomer, Philipp Melanchthon." According to Enders, 8, p. 304, probably published at Nuremberg (by Luther's friend, W. Link) in 1530 or the beginning of 1531.

[4] Cp. B. Heyne, "Uber Besessenheitswahn bei geistigen Erkrankungszuständen," Paderborn, 1904, p. 52 ff.

[5] To Wenceslaus Link, December, 1530, "Briefwechsel," 8, p. 326.

[6] Wolfgang Musculus ("Itinerar.," May 25, 1536), in Kolde, "Analecta Lutherana," p. 220.

[7] On July 5, 1537, "Briefwechsel," p. 245.

in the Pope's or the devil's name had shown themselves lenient, he would denounce from the pulpit.[1] To Magister Johann Saxo, who in turn related it to Bugenhagen, he declared, that, should the burial of the dog with all the rites of the Church be proved to have taken place, then "Paul would pay for it with his neck" on account of the mockery of religion involved.[2] Even later Luther declared: "I should have liked to have written his death-sentence"; he added, however, that the culprit had really "buried the dog in order to drive away the plague."[3]

Possessed, like Luther, by a positive craze for seeing diabolical intervention everywhere, Bugenhagen shared his superstitions to the full. He it was who knew how to expel the devil from the churn by what Luther termed the "best" method, which certainly was the coarsest imaginable.[4] When, in December, 1536, a storm broke over Wittenberg he vied with Luther in declaring, that since it was quite out of the order of nature, it must be altogether satanic" ("*plane sathanicum.*").[5]

He discerned the work of the devil just as clearly in the persistence of Catholicism and its resistance to Lutheranism. "Dear Lord Jesus Christ," he writes, "arise with Thy Holy Angels and thrust down into the abyss of hell the diabolical murder and blasphemy of Antichrist."[6] Elsewhere he prays in similar fashion, "that God would put to shame the devil's doctrines and idolatries of the Pope and save poor people from the errors of Antichrist."[7] Among all the qualities he had acquired from Luther, his patron and model, this hatred—which the Sectarians of the new faith who differed from Luther were also made to feel—is perhaps the most striking. In his case, however, fanaticism was tempered with greater coolness and calculation. For calm obstinacy Bugenhagen in many ways recalls Calvin.

When Superintendent of the Saxon Electorate he introduced into the Litanies a new petition: "From the blasphemy, cruel murder and uncleanness of Thine enemies the Turk and the Pope, graciously deliver us."[8]

With delight he was able to write to Luther from Denmark,[9] that the Mass was forbidden throughout the country and that the mendicant Friars had been driven over the borders as "sedition-mongers" and "blasphemers" because they refused

[1] July 26, 1537, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 183 ("Briefwechsel," 11, p. 250).

[2] Saxo to Bugenhagen, July 5, 1537, "Briefwechsel Bugenhagens," ed. Vogt, p. 151: "*actum esse de Pauli collo*," etc.

[3] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 181.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 380. See above, p. 230. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 385.

[6] Voigt, "Herzog Albrecht," in Raumer, "Hist. Taschenbuch," 2, p. 314. Döllinger, "Die Reformation," 2, p. 142.

[7] Bugenhagen, "Wahrhaftige Historie," Wittenberg, 1547, Conclusion. P. Knittel in "KL."[2], Art. "Bugenhagen."

[8] Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 142.

[9] On February 4, 1538, from Copenhagen, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 11, p. 329.

to accept the King's offers (" some of them were hanged ").[1] The Canons had everywhere been ordered to attend the Lutheran Communion on festivals ; the four thousand parishes had now to be preserved in the new faith which had dawned upon the land. Bugenhagen, on August 12, 1537, a few weeks after his arrival, vested in alb and cope, and with great ecclesiastical pomp, had placed the crown on the head of King Christian III. who had already given the Catholics a foretaste of what was to come and had caused all the bishops to be imprisoned.

" All proceeds merrily," Luther told Bucer on December 6, " God is working through Pomeranus ; he crowned the King and Queen like a true bishop. He has given a new span of life to the University [of Copenhagen]."[2] Bugenhagen was inexorable in his extirpation of the worship of " Antichrist " in Denmark, even down to the smallest details. To the King, concerning a statue of Pope St. Lucius in the Cathedral Church at Roskilde, he wrote, that this must be removed ; it was an exact representation of the Pauline prophecy concerning Antichrist ; the sword, which the Pope carried in his hand as the symbol of his death, Bugenhagen regarded as emblematic of the cruelty of the Popes, who now preferred to cut off the heads of others and to arrogate to themselves authority over all kings and rulers ; if a true likeness of the Pope was really wanted, then he would have to be represented as a devil with claws and a fiendish countenance, and be decked out in a golden mantle, a staff, a sword and three crowns ; from such a book the laity would be able to read the truth.[3]

Justus Jonas, who, of all his acquaintances, remained longest with Luther at Wittenberg, like Bugenhagen, bestowed upon the master his enduring veneration and friendship. His numerous translations of Luther's works are in themselves a proof of his warm attachment to his ideas and of his rare affinity to him. He, next to Melanchthon and Bugenhagen, was the clearest-headed and most active assistant in the affairs of Wittenberg, and his name frequently appears, together with those of Luther and the two other intimates, among the signatures appended to memoranda dealing with matters ecclesiastical.

To the close relationship between Luther and Jonas many

[1] The Superintendent of Zealand, Peter Palladius, who had betaken himself to Denmark with Bugenhagen from Wittenberg, writes : " The thieves [monks] have now been driven out of the land, and some of them hanged." L. Schmitt, " Der Karmeliter Paulus Heliä, Vorkämpfer der kathol. Kirche gegen die sog. Reformation in Dänemark," Freiburg, 1893, p. 160 f. N. Paulus, " Protestantismus und Toleranz," p. 19.

[2] " Briefwechsel," 11, p. 300 f.

[3] On November 21, 1537, " Briefwechsel Bugenhagens," p. 162 ff. Hörigk, *loc. cit.*, p. 35 f.

interesting details preserved in the records remain to attest.

Jonas once dubbed Luther a Demosthenes of rhetoric.[1] Luther in his turn praised Jonas not merely for his translations, but also for his sermons; he had all the gifts of a good orator, "save that he cleared his throat too often."[2] Yet he also accuses him of conceit for declaring that "he knew all that was contained in Holy Scripture" and also for his annoyance and surprise at the doubts raised concerning the above assertion.[3]

On the other hand, the bitter hostility displayed by Jonas towards all Luther's enemies, pleased the latter. Jonas, taking up the thread of the conversation, remarked on one occasion to the younger guests at Luther's table: "Remember this definition: A Papist is a liar and a murderer, or the devil himself. They are not to be trusted in the least, for they thirst after our blood."[4]

His opinion of Jacob Schenk coincided with that of Luther: His "head is full of confused notions"; he was as "poison" amongst the Wittenberg theologians, so that Bugenhagen did well in refusing him his daughter in marriage.[5] Of Agricola he remarked playfully, when the latter had uttered the word "*oportet*" (it must be): "The 'must' must be removed; the salt has got into it and we refuse to take it." Whereupon Luther replied: "He must swallow the 'must' but I shall put such salt into it that he will want to spit it out again."[6] No one, so well as Jonas, knew how to cheer up Luther, hence Katey sometimes invited him to table secretly.[7] It is true that his chatter sometimes proved tiresome to the other guests, for one of them, viz. Cordatus, laments that he interrupted Luther's best sayings with his endless talk.[8] The truth is, of course, that the pupils were anxious to drink in words from Luther's own lips. Luther for his part encouraged his friend when the latter was oppressed by illness or interior anxieties. Jonas suffered from calculus, and, during one of his attacks, Luther said to him: "Your illness keeps you watchful and troubled, it is of more use to you than ten silver mines. God knows how to direct the lives of His own people and we must obey Him, each one according to our calling. Beloved God, how is Thy Church distracted both within and without!"[9] When Jonas on one occasion, being already unwell, was greatly troubled with scruples of conscience and doubts about the faith ("*tentatus gravissime*"), Luther sent

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 219.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[4] Mathesius, "Tischreden," p. 83, in 1540.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[7] H. Weller to the Councillors at Halle, April 18, 1567, "Briefwechsel des Justus Jonas," ed. G. Kawerau, 2, p. 343.
[8] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 26, where he states that Luther also found fault with Katey's many words, "*quibus ipsa perpetuo optima verba eius interturbabat. Et D. Ionas eadem erat virtute.*"
[9] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 317 *seq.*

him, all written out, the consoling words with which he himself was wont to find comfort in similar circumstances : " Have I not been found worthy to be called to the service of the Word and been commanded, under pain of Thine everlasting displeasure, to believe what has been revealed to me and in no way to doubt it ? . . . Act manfully and strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in God."[1]

In the matter of faith Jonas was easily contented, and, for this, Luther praised him ; since a man could not comprehend the Articles, it was sufficient for him to begin with a mere assent (" *ut incipiamus tantum assentiri* "). This theology actually appealed to Luther so much that he exclaimed : " Yes, dear Dr. Jonas, if a man could believe it as it stands, his heart would burst for joy ! That is sure. Hence we shall never attain to its comprehension."[2] On Ascension Day, 1540, Luther's pupils wrote down these words which fell from his lips : " I am fond of Jonas, but if he were to ascend up to heaven and be taken from us, what should I then think ? . . . Strange, I cannot understand it and cannot believe it, and yet all the Apostles believed. . . . Oh, if only a man could believe it ! "[3]

Jonas found the faith amongst the country people around Wittenberg so feeble and barren of fruit, that, on one occasion, he complained of it with great anger. Luther sought to pacify him : God's chastisement will fall upon these peasants in due time ; God is strong enough to deal with them. He added, however, admitting that Jonas was right : " Is it not a disgrace that in the whole Wittenberg district only one peasant can be found in all the villages who seriously exhorts his household in the Word of God and the Catechism ? The others are all going to the devil ! "[4]

Justus Jonas, whose real name was Jodocus (Jobst) Koch, was a native of Nordhausen in the province of Saxony. He, like Bugenhagen, could not boast of a theological education as he had devoted himself to jurisprudence, and, as an enthusiastic Erasmian, to Humanism. In 1514 or 1515 he became priest at Erfurt, and in 1518 Doctor of Civil and Canon Law, at the same time securing a comfortable canonry. He attached himself to Luther during the latter's journey to Worms, and in July, 1521, migrated to Wittenberg, where he lectured at the University on Canon Law and also on theology, after having been duly promoted to the dignity of Doctor in the theological Faculty ; at the same time he was provost of the Schlosskirche.

[1] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 219. See above, p. 110 f.
[2] Mathesius, " Tischreden," p. 313, in 1543. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[4] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 1, p. 175 : " *tantum unum habere rusticum ex tot pagis*," etc.

In 1522 he married a Wittenberg girl, and, in the following year, vindicated this step against Johann Faber in "*Adv. J. Fabrum, scortationis patronum, pro coniugio sacerdotali,*" just as Bugenhagen after his marriage had found occasion to defend in print priestly matrimony. In 1523 he lectured on Romans. Of his publications his translations of Luther's works were particularly prized.

His practical mind, his schooling in the law, and his business abilities, no less than the friendship of Luther bestowed upon a man so ready with the pen, procured for him his nomination as dean of the theological Faculty; this position he retained from 1523 till 1533. Jonas, the "theologian by choice," as Luther termed him in contradistinction to Amsdorf, the "theologian by nature," took part in all the important events connected with Lutheranism, in the Conference at Marburg, the Diet of Augsburg and the Visitations in the Saxon Electorate from 1528 onwards, also in the introduction of the innovations into the Duchy of Saxony in 1539. In 1541 he introduced the new church-system in the town of Halle, which till then had been the residence of the Cardinal-Elector, Albert of Mayence. From the time of the War of Schmalkalden and the misfortunes which ensued, his interior troubles grew into a mental malady. Melanchthon speaks of his "*animus ægrotus.*" His was a form of the "*morbus melancholicus*"[1] which we meet with so often at that time amongst disappointed and broken-down men within the Protestant fold, and which was unquestionably due to religious troubles. According to the report of one Protestant, Cyriacus Schnauss (1556), and of a certain anonymous writer, his death (†October 9, 1555),[2] was happier than his life. To the darker side of his character belongs the malicious and personal nature of his polemics, as experienced, for instance, by Johann Faber and Wicel, whom he attacked with the weapon of calumny, and his "constant, often petty, concern in the increase of his income."[3]

[1] See vol. iv., xxiv. 4.

[2] Cp. G. Kawerau, "Jonas' Briefwechsel," 2, p. lv. f., and also in "RE. für prot. Theol.,"[3] Art. "Jonas."

[3] Kawerau, in "RE.," *ibid.* Concerning his polemics with Wicel, Kawerau admits (in "Jonas' Briefwechsel," 2, p. xxxviii.) that "Georg Witzels historia" by Jonas is no "reliable source," and of the attack on the Emperor he declares (p. xlix.) that, during the Schmalkalden War, Jonas caused him to be prayed against as "Antichrist."

# CHAPTER XX

## ATTEMPTS AT UNION IN VIEW OF THE PROPOSED COUNCIL

### 1. Zürich, Münster, the Wittenberg Concord, 1536

The tension between Luther and the Swiss theologians grew ever greater after Zwingli's death. Zwingli's successors complained bitterly of the unkind treatment and the reprobation meted out at Wittenberg to themselves, as well as to Zwingli's memory, and their doctrines.

Leo Judæ, one of the leaders of the Swiss party, writing in 1534 to Bucer, a kindred spirit, concerning the latter's rough treatment of Schwenckfeld, takes the opportunity to voice his bitter grudge against Luther: "If it is right to oppose Schwenckfeld, why do we not write in the same way against Luther? Why do we not issue a proclamation warning people against him, seeing that he advocates theories, not only on the Sacrament but on other matters too, which are utterly at variance with Holy Scripture? Yet he hands us over to Satan and decrees our exclusion."[1]

Martin Bucer himself complained in 1534 to his Zwinglian friend Bullinger: "The fury is intolerable with which Luther storms and rages against everyone who he imagines differs from him, even though not actually an opponent. Thus he curses the most pious men and those who have been of the greatest service to the Church. It is this alone which has brought me into the arena and induced me to join my voice to yours in this controversy on the Sacrament."[2]

Heinrich Bullinger, on whom, after Zwingli's death, devolved the leadership of the Swiss innovators, wrote later to Bucer: "Luther's rude hostility might be allowed to pass would he but leave intact respect for Holy Scripture. . . . To such lengths has this man's proud spirit carried him, while all the preachers and ministers worship his writings as so many oracles, and extol his spirit as apostolic, of whose fulness all have received. What has already taken place leads us to apprehend that this man will eventually bring great misfortune upon the Church."[3]

[1] On February 9, 1534, Kolde, "*Anal. Lutherana*," p. 204. For other similar passages see above, p 277 f.

[2] To Bullinger, April 9, 1534, *ibid.*, p. 205: "*furit et debacchatur in quoslibet . . . sicque devovet viros sanctissimos*," etc.

[3] Letter of December 8, 1543. Cp. Hess, "Leben Bullingers," 1, p. 404 *seq.*

Just as Luther's work differed from the religious innovations in Switzerland, so it differed equally, or even more, from that of the Anabaptists, despite the fact that the latter traced their origin to Luther's doctrine of the Bible as the one source of faith, and were largely indebted to him for the stress he had laid on the inward Word.[1] "The Anabaptist movement was a product of the religious innovations of the sixteenth century," "the fanatical sect an outcome of the so-called Reformation,"[2] Notwithstanding the severe persecution they encountered, particularly in Switzerland and in the German uplands, they soon spread throughout other parts of Germany, thanks chiefly to the attractions of their conventicle system. An Imperial mandate of January 4, 1528, imposed the death penalty on Anabaptist heretics, their sacrilegious repetition of baptism being taken as equivalent to a denial of this sacrament and therefore as a capital offence against religion.

The growth of the Anabaptist heresy, in spite of all measures of repression, filled Luther with astonishment, but its explanation is to be found not only in the religious subjectivism let loose among the masses, but also in the fact, that, many elements of revolt smouldering even before Luther's day helped to further the Anabaptist conflagration. The fanatics also gained many adherents among those who were disappointed in Luther owing to their hopes that he would ameliorate morals not being realised; instead of returning to the true Church they preferred to put their trust in these new sects, thinking that their outward rigour was a guarantee that they would amend the life of the people. The popular preaching and ways of the Anabaptist missioners, recalling the apostolic age of the Church, had a powerful effect upon those of the lower classes who had religious leanings; the sufferings and persecution they endured with such constancy also earned them admiration and sympathy. The sectarians were proud of "the self-sacrificing brotherly love existing in their communities, so different from the stress laid upon a faith only too often quite barren of good works."[3]

They were so firm in their repudiation of the Lutheran doctrine of Justification and held fast so frankly to the

[1] See vol. ii., p. 363 ff.
[2] F. X. Funk in "KL.,"[2] Art. "Wiedertäufer," col. 1491, 1483.
[3] G. Kawerau, in Möller, "KG.," $3^3$, p. 92.

Catholic principle of the necessity of man's co-operation in order to secure God's pardon, that Luther angrily classed them with the Papists : " They are foxes," he wrote, " who are tied to the Papists by their tails, though the head is different ; they behave outwardly as though they were their greatest enemies, and yet they share with them the same heresy against Christ our only Saviour, Who alone is our Righteousness."[1] The Anabaptists also opposed the Lutheran doctrine of the Supper, denying, like the Zwinglians, the Real Presence. Their congregations, however, differed vastly both in belief and in observance. To all intents and purposes their strictness was merely outward, serving to cloak the vices of their lives and their frivolous enjoyment of the " freedom of the Gospel."

Luther's hostility to the Anabaptists was in many respects of service to Lutheranism ; it was inspired and promoted by the law of self-preservation. The culmination of the movement at Münster, in Westphalia, showed that the Wittenberger's instinct had not erred. It is true, however, that Luther's harsh and repellent conduct towards the Anabaptist sects caused the loss to the Protestants of much that was good which might well have been retained had he shown a little more consideration at least for the better minds among the " fanatics " ; their criticism might have done much to remedy what was really amiss.

When, in 1534, the Anabaptists became all-powerful at Münster, and that under their very worst form, they made haste to attack Luther. He, of course, was in duty bound to disapprove of their fearsome excesses, particularly when the freedom of the Evangel degenerated into obligatory polygamy and the most revolting service of the flesh. The seditious spirits, in their hatred, declared that " there are two false prophets, the Pope and Luther, but that, of the two, Luther is the worse."[2] Luther, on his side, retorted : " Alas, what can I write of these wretched creatures at Münster ? It is perfectly evident that the devil reigns there in person, yea, one devil sits on the back of another, like the toads do."[3]

[1] " Comment. in Galat.," ed. Irmischer, 1, p. 8.

[2] So at least says Luther in the Preface to a work of Urban Regius against the Anabaptists of Münster, " Werke," Erl. ed., 63, p. 332 : " They write : That there are," etc. Luther strongly urges the contrary.

[3] In the Preface to the " Neue Zeitung von Münster," *ibid.*, p. 336. Cp. Luther's letter to Frederick Myconius on July 5, 1534, " Briefwechsel," 10, p. 62 : " *De anabaptistis Monasteriensibus parum curo. Satan furit, sed stat Scriptura.*"

After the siege of Münster had closed in its capture on June 25, 1535, and the reign of terror had been brought to an end by the execution of the leaders, viz. Johann of Leyden and his friends, some of Luther's followers turned their attention to the Sacramentarian Zwinglians of Switzerland and South Germany, in the hope that some basis might be found for union.

Paul III. had ascended the Papal throne in 1534. On his showing a real intention to summon an Œcumenical Council in order to put an end to the religious schism, the Reformers began to feel keenly how necessary it was to unite for the purpose of offering practical resistance to their common foe, viz. Catholicism. The political situation was likewise favourable to such efforts. The Nuremberg truce in 1532 had expressly been intended to last only for a limited period, hence the necessity to find new means to make their position secure and increase their numbers.

In 1535 a star of hope which seemed to forebode some agreement rose on the horizon. On this Luther wrote as follows to a trusted friend in August: "An attempt is being made, with great hopes and yearning, to come to some agreement ('*concordia*') between ourselves and the Sacramentarians. Christ grant it to be realised and of His Goodness remove that great scandal so that strong measures may not be necessary as at Münster."[1] Hence the Swiss theologians in his eyes were scarcely better than the authors of the disgraceful abominations in Westphalia.

What sort of "concord" was to be expected while such a temper held sway unless, indeed, the Zwinglians were prepared to renounce their own existence and throw their master overboard?

The prime movers in the attempt to bring about an understanding between the Lutherans and the Swiss and the like-minded Evangelicals of Upper Germany, were the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, and the theologian Martin Bucer.

Bucer, who was unremitting in his efforts to secure that union which was his life-ideal, had already, at the Diet of Augsburg, paved the way for an understanding, not without some success. At the Coburg (September 25–26, 1530) he managed to win over Luther to his view, viz. that an agreement might be looked for with the Strasburgers regarding

[1] To Jacob Probst at Bremen, August 23, 1535, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 197 f.

the Sacrament.[1] He then travelled through Upper Germany and Switzerland with a plan for compromise, in which the contradiction between the denial and assertion of the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament was ably concealed; Melanchthon he met at Cassel in 1534, and on this occasion, ostensibly in the name of many South-German theologians, made proposals which seem to have satisfied Luther.

After further preliminaries, peace negotiations were to have taken place at Eisleben in the spring of 1536, but as Luther, owing to illness and new scruples, did not appear, discussion was deferred till May 22, the delegates to meet at Wittenberg. Thither representatives of Strasburg, Augsburg, Memmingen, Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Frankfurt, and Constance betook themselves, accompanied by the Lutherans, Menius from Eisenach and Myconius from Gotha. No Swiss delegate was present.

After protracted negotiations the South-German theologians accepted a number of articles drawn up by Melanchthon and known as the Wittenberg Concord.[2]

In this they recognised the practice of infant baptism; as regards Confession, they admitted that, though confession as formerly practised could not be tolerated, yet a humble private interview with the preacher, and private absolution previous to the reception of communion, were useful and wholesome. On the other hand, however, the main difference, viz. that concerning the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, was only seemingly bridged over. It is true the South-German delegates accepted the formula, that in the Sacrament, the Body and Blood of the Lord are "really and substantially" present by virtue of Christ's words of institution, so that even the "unworthy" verily receive the Body and Blood of Christ. The interpretation which they, headed by Bucer, placed upon the words showed, however, quite plainly, that they did not agree with Luther, but still clung to the view that Christ is not corporally present but only by that faith, which even the "unworthy" may have,

[1] Cp. Bucer to Luther, August 25, 1530, "Luthers Briefwechsel," 8, p. 209 ff. Nicholas Gerbel to Luther, from Strasburg, October 21, 1530, *ibid.*, p. 292; Luther to Joh. Brismann at Riga, November 7, 1530, *ibid.*, p. 312: "*Sacramentarios, saltem Strassburgenses, nobiscum in gratiam redire spes est*"; he adds, however, a doubt as to Bucer's sincerity: "*Si non fallit quod dicit; admonui enim, ne simularet.*"

[2] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 75 *seq.*

and that He does not bestow on the communicant His Flesh and Blood, but merely His grace. "The Real Presence of Christ was to him [Bucer] after all only a spiritual presence."[1] At any rate "the South-Germans, under stress of political danger, rejoined Luther,"[2] though some of the towns subsequently added conditions to their acceptance of the arrangements made by their theologians.

Having been thus far successful Bucer, with consummate ability and eloquence, proceeded to try to win over the friendly Swiss Zwinglians to the Concord.

The Swiss were not, however, to be so easily induced to take this step. In spite of several friendly letters from Luther they could not arrive at the same apparent agreement with him as the South-Germans. For this the blame rested to some extent on Luther's shoulders, his conduct at this juncture, owing to political considerations, being neither well-defined nor straightforward. The Burgomasters and Councillors of the seven towns, Zürich, Bern, Basle, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Mühlhausen and Bienne, addressed letters to him couched in conciliatory language, but Luther, in spite of Bullinger's request, would not even enumerate in detail the points of difference which separated them from him. For the nonce he preferred the policy of leaving doctrine alone and of "calming down, smoothing and furthering matters for the best,"[3] though all the time he was well aware of their theological views and firm in his repudiation of them.

"The matter refuses to suit itself to us, and we must accordingly suit ourselves to it,"[4] such was, for a long while, his motto. He is willing to hold out to the Zwinglians the hand of friendship without, however, consenting to regard the points in dispute as minor matters. Possibly he cherished the hope that, little by little, agreement would be reached even on these points.

Luther's attitude has rightly been considered strange, particularly when compared with his former severity. Even Protestants have instanced it as remarkable, that he should

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 348, with account of the acceptance of the Concord. [2] Kawerau, in Möller, "KG.," $3^3$, p. 125.

[3] Luther to Jacob Meyer, Burgomaster of Basle, February 17, 1537, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 172 ("Briefwechsel," 11, p. 201). To this letter Luther frequently refers as best expressive of his standpoint.

[4] *Ibid.*

have contrived " to close his eyes to the differences which still remained in spite of the Concord, and to agree with people whose previous teaching he had regarded as dangerous heresy, requiring to be expelled by a determined testimony to the truth."[1] At any rate " the broadness manifested by Luther in this matter of faith " was something very foreign to his usual habits.

The explanation of the change in his behaviour lies chiefly in his urgent desire " to become terrible to the Pope and the Emperor " by forming an alliance with the Swiss Churches and townships, a hope which he even expressed to his Wittenberg friends, adding, however, that " in men one can never trust," and, " I will not surrender God's Word."[2] To Duke Albert of Prussia he wrote full of joy, in May, 1538 : " Things have been set going with the Swiss, who hitherto have been at loggerheads with us on account of the Sacrament. . . . I hope God will put an end to this scandal, not for our sake, for we have deserved it, but for His Name's sake, and in order to vex the abomination at Rome, for they are greatly affrighted and apprehensive at the new tidings."[3] Considerations of policy had entirely altered Luther's tone to the Zwinglians.

The bridge, however, collapsed before its completion.

The unrestrained language which Luther again employed towards the Swiss did much to demonstrate how little real foundation there was in the efforts at conciliation. The experiences he met with made him regret his passing opportunism, and in later life the tone in which he spoke of the Zwinglian errors and their supporters was violent in the extreme. When a letter reached him from the Evangelicals of Venice bewailing the dissensions aroused by the controversy on the Sacrament, he said in his reply, dated June, 1543 : These Zwinglians and their neighbours " are intoxicated by an alien spirit, and their company must be avoided as infectious."[4]

To his friend Link he wrote about that time : " These Swiss and Zürichers pronounce their own condemnation by their pride

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 348.
[2] " Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 46.
[3] On May 6, 1538, " Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 200 (" Briefwechsel," 11, p. 357).
[4] On June 13, 1543, " Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 567 f.

and madness, as Paul says" (Titus iii. 11).[1] To Zürich itself he soon made no secret of his changed temper, writing in August that: he could have no fellowship with the preachers there; they were determined to lead the unfortunate people to hell; the judgment of God which had overtaken Zwingli would also fall upon these preachers of blasphemy, since they had made up their minds to follow Zwingli.[2]

In September of that same year appeared his energetic "Kurtz Bekentnis Doctor Martin Luthers vom heiligen Sacrament."[3]

Complying with a need he felt he sought in this writing to give public testimony to his faith in the Eucharist; in order at once to disperse the ghosts of the Concord, and to bar the progress of the denial of the Sacrament which had already infected Melanchthon and other friends around him, he here speaks frankly and openly. In his usual vein he says, that it was his wish "to be able to boast at the Judgment Seat of the Lord" that "I condemned with all my power the fanatics and enemies of the Sacrament, Carlstadt, 'Zwingel,' Œcolampadius, 'Stinkfield' [Schwenckfeld], and their disciples at Zürich and wherever else they be." The fanatics, he says, make a "great to-do" about a spiritual eating and drinking, but they are "murderers of souls." They have a "devilish heart and lying lips." Whoever believed not the Article concerning Christ's Presence in the Sacrament, could not believe in the Incarnation. "Hence there is no alternative, you must either believe everything or nothing." Thus Luther himself at last comes to urge against his opponents what Catholic apologists had long before urged against him. They had said: If you set aside this or that article of faith on the grounds of a higher illumination, the result will be the complete subversion of the faith, for the edifice of doctrine is one inseparable whole; the divine and the ecclesiastical authority is the same for all the articles, and, if everything be not accepted, in the end nothing will remain.

### 2. Efforts in view of a Council. Vergerio visits Luther

Pope Clement VII. (†1534), though at first apprehensive, owing to his knowledge of what had happened in the time of the Reforming Councils, had nevertheless, towards the end of his life, promised the Emperor Charles V. at Bologna, in 1533, that he would summon an Œcumenical Council. He had also sought to persuade the King of France, François I., on the occasion of their meeting at Marseilles in the same year, to agree to the Council's being held in one of the Italian towns which Pope and Emperor had agreed on at

[1] June 20, 1543, *ibid.*, p. 571.

[2] To the printer, Christoph Froschauer, at Zürich, August 31, 1543, *ibid.*, p. 587.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 396 *seq.*

Bologna.[1] But while Rome showed herself willing enough, the King of France put great obstacles in the way of a Council, in the hope, that, by preventing it, he would prevent Germany from securing peace within her borders.

Paul III., the successor of Clement VII., was more successful, though he too had to battle with his own scruples and to overcome obstacles greater even than those which faced his predecessor.

Soon after beginning his pontificate he dispatched three Nuncios to pave the way for the Council, Rodolfo Pio de Carpi to France, Giovanni Guidiccione to Spain, and Pierpaolo Vergerio to Germany. The last of these found the Catholic Courts perfectly willing to support the Council; the heads of the Evangelical party, however, chose to observe an attitude to be more fully described further on.

Charles V. having agreed to the choice of Mantua as the town where the Council was to be held, Paul III., in spite of the refusal of the Protestants, by his Bull of June 2, 1536, summoned the bishops to meet at Mantua on May 23 of the following year. Needless to say, the assembly and its procedure were to be governed by the same rules as in the case of earlier Councils of the Church.

The journey of Vergerio, the Nuncio, through Germany deserves closer attention on account of his meeting with Luther.

The Papal envoy, who hailed from Capodistria and was more skilful in Court transactions than in theology, commenced his journey on February 10, 1535. From Vienna he proceeded to visit the Bavarian Dukes and Suabia. He then travelled along the Main and the Rhine as far north as Liège, returning by way of Cologne through Saxony to Brandenburg. Coming south from Berlin he passed a night at Wittenberg, where he met Luther, and returned by way of Dresden and Prague to Vienna. Everywhere he did his best not only to secure consent to the Papal plan of holding the Council in an Italian town, but also, as he had been instructed, to combat the dangerous though popular opposite plan of a German national Council. He could talk well, had a sharp eye for business, and a fine gift of observation. His expectations as regards the Protestants were,

[1] See "*Concilii Tridentini Actorum Pars* 1," ed. S. Ehses, 1904. Introduction by Ehses, chap. 10. Cp. Pastor, "Gesch. der Päpste," 4, 2, 1907, pp. 471 ff., 582 ff.; 5, 1909, p. 31 ff.

however, far too rosy. The polite reception he met with from the Protestant sovereigns and the honours done him flattered his vanity, indeed, but were of little service to the cause he represented.

What his intention was in going to Wittenberg and interviewing Luther is not clear. He had no instructions to do so. If he hoped to win over Luther to work for the Council and for reunion, he was sadly deceived. In reality all he did was to expose himself and his cause to insult and to furnish his guest a welcome opportunity for boasting. In that same year, in a work in which he held up the Council of Constance to derision, Luther told the people how little Councils were to be respected; by this Council the Church had said to Christ: "You are a heretic and your teaching is of the devil"; hence the Roman Church was possessed, "not of seven, but of seven and seventy barrelfuls of devils";[1] now at last it was time for Christ to uncover back and front the "raving, bloodthirsty scarlet woman and reveal her shame to the whole world" in order to put an end to "the insult which has been, and still is being, offered to our dear Saviour by the dragon heads which peer out of the back parts of the Pope-Ass and vomit forth abuse."[2]

From Vergerio's circumstantial reports as Nuncio, and from other sources,[3] we learn the details of the historic meeting between the standard-bearer of the religious innovations and the envoy of the head of Christendom.

On his arrival at Wittenberg, on November 6, the Nuncio, accompanied by twenty-one horsemen, proceeded to the Castle, where he was to be the guest of Metzsch, the Commandant. He sent an invitation by Metzsch to Luther to spend the evening with him, but the latter refused to come so late and the visit was accordingly arranged for the following morning. Luther dressed himself in his best clothes, put on a gold chain, had himself carefully shaved and his hair tidily brushed. To the astonished barber he said jestingly, that he must appear young in the eyes of the Legate so as to give him the impression that he

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 31, p. 395 *seq.* In the writing "Etliche Sprüche wider das Concilium Obstantiense" (Constantiense).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 393. Cp. *ibid.*, p. 411; cp. his mocking "Ausschreibung eines heiligen freien, christlichen Conciliums."

[3] Vergerio to Ricalcati, November 13, 1535 ("Nuntiaturber." 1, ed. W. Friedensburg, p. 539 ff.). "Corp. Ref.," 2, p. 987 (Spalatin's note). "Werke," Erl. ed., 62, p. 58 (Table-Talk), Pallavicini, "Storia del Conc. di Trento," 3, 18. Sarpi, *idem*, 1, n. 74. Cp. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 371 ff. Pastor, *op. cit.*, 5, p. 49 f.

was still able to undertake and accomplish a great deal and thus make them fear him at Rome; he was determined to read the Roman gentry a good lesson; they had molested him and his followers enough, now it was his turn to get his own back. As he sat in the carriage with Bugenhagen the pastor of Wittenberg, ready for the drive to the Castle, he said: "Here go the German Pope and Cardinal Pomeranus, the chosen instruments of the Almighty."

After being presented to the Legate, during which ceremony he doffed his hat (the only sign of respect he was willing to vouchsafe), he was invited to breakfast with him. During the conversation which ensued he was at pains to show his real feelings by a demeanour as hostile and threatening as possible. "During the whole of the meal," as he himself related later to Justus Jonas,[1] "I played the true Luther; what sort of things I said could not be put on paper." At the first greeting he at once asked the Nuncio ironically, whether he had not perchance already heard him decried in Italy as a drunken German.

Pope Paul III. being mentioned by the Nuncio, Luther said, that he might quite well be a prudent and honest man; such was the common report concerning the Farnese when he (Luther) was at Rome; but then, he added with a mocking smile, at that time he himself was still in the habit of saying Mass.

Luther himself in the Table-Talk relates his reply to the proposal to attend the Council: "I shall come," he said, "but you Papists are working and exerting yourselves in vain . . . for, when in Council, you never discuss wholesome doctrine, the Sacraments, or the faith which alone makes us just and saves us . . . but only foolish puerilities, such as the long habits and frocks which religious and priests are to wear, how wide the girdle shall be and how large the tonsure," etc. The account goes on to say, that, at this sally, Vergerio, turning to his companion, said: "Verily he has hit the nail on the head." It is difficult to believe that Vergerio actually made such a statement in this connection.

Speaking of the Œcumenical Council which had been summoned, we read in Vergerio's report that Luther with insufferable arrogance exclaimed: "We stand in no need of a Council for ourselves or our followers, for we already have the firm Evangelical doctrine and rule; but Christendom needs the Council in order to learn to distinguish truth and error, so far as it is still held captive by false doctrine. At this outburst the Nuncio expressed his astonishment: "Yes, I will come to the Council," Luther interrupted him angrily, "I will forfeit my head rather than fail to defend my teaching against the whole world. What proceeds from my mouth, is not my own anger, but the wrath of God!"—Whoever knows the man can scarcely doubt that Luther would actually have gone to the Council under certain conditions, particularly if furnished with a safe-conduct, though, of course, only once again to "play the real Luther." He

[1] On November 10, 1535, "Briefwechsel," 10, p. 267: "*Egi Lutherum ipsum tota mensa.*"

certainly did not lack the audacity. He even declared himself willing to agree to any of the places proposed for the Council, whether Mantua, Verona, or Bologna; when it was pointed out that Bologna belonged to the Pope, Luther, in the presence of the Pope's own representative, cried: "Good God, so the Pope has grabbed that city too!" Curiously enough, in the report he forwarded to Rome, the Nuncio declares himself satisfied with Luther's readiness to attend the Council.

Vergerio also led the conversation to Henry VIII., the King of England; as Robert Barnes, an emissary of his, was then staying with Luther at Wittenberg, he may have hoped to learn something of the King's intentions. Luther, however, was extremely reticent. As he himself expressed it in a letter, he acted the part of Barnes's representative with "most vexatious sayings," i.e. with such as would most annoy and vex the Nuncio. When mention was made of the cruel execution of Bishop John Fisher—created Cardinal whilst awaiting his fate in prison—Luther ejaculated that his death was a judgment from on high because he had won the Cardinalate by withstanding the Gospel.

Vergerio coming to speak of the Wittenberg hierarchy, Luther admitted that, at Wittenberg, they ordained priests and that Pastor Bugenhagen, who was then present, "was the bishop appointed for that work; he ordained as St. Paul had taught"; all in vain had the "most holy bishops" of the Papists refused to ordain the Lutheran preachers. Alluding to his family, he said he hoped to leave behind him in his firstborn a great preacher, priest and teacher of the Evangel. The "reverend" nun "whom he had married had so far presented him with three boys and two girls." Various religious practices came under discussion and Vergerio, hoping to please, remarked, that he had found much amongst the German Protestants different from what he had been led to expect. He also spoke of fasting, but Luther bluntly declared, that, just because the Pope had commanded it, they would refuse to observe it; if, however, the Emperor were to give the order, they would comply with it; he himself would be right glad were the Emperor to set apart two days in every week to be kept as strict fasts.

Though all this, which, moreover, the Nuncio took quite seriously, made him angry, as is evident from his report, yet he found leisure during the conversation to observe his guest closely. He describes his dress: A doublet of dark camelot cloth, the sleeves trimmed with satin; over this a rather short coat of serge, edged with fox skin.[1] The large, rough buttons used struck the Italian as peculiar. On Luther's fingers he saw several rings and round his neck the heavy gold chain. He found that Luther did not speak Latin very well and ventured to surmise that certain books, couched in better Latin, were probably not really written by him. Of this, however, there is no proof. Luther admitted to him that he was not used to speaking Latin and that

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 375.

he was more at home in German. He looked strong, so Vergerio says, and though past fifty did not appear to be even forty years of age. He considered Luther's features extremely coarse, tallying with his manners, which displayed "presumption, malice and want of reflection." His way of speaking showed that "everything he did was done in irritation, annoyance and out of spite; he was a silly fellow, without either depth or discernment."[1]

Vergerio also fancied he saw in him something devilish. The longer he observed the piercing, uncanny glance of Luther's eyes, so he writes, the more he was put in mind of certain persons who were regarded by many as possessed; the heat, the restlessness, the fury and frenzy expressed in his eyes were quite similar to theirs.[2] He even casually refers to circumstances (which, however, he does not describe) of Luther's birth and earlier years, which he had learnt from friends of Luther's who had been intimate with him before he became a monk; they confirmed him in his belief that the devil had entered into Luther.[3] Although Vergerio immediately after admits his doubt ("whether he be possessed or not"), yet in what he had written Contarini discovered sufficient to justify him in saying that Vergerio "found that Martin was begotten of the devil."[4] Contarini here is really building on a stupid fable, which, as will be shown later (vol. iv., xxvii. 1), is first met with in the writings of Petrus Sylvius, a Catholic author. What the Legate says concerning the circumstances of Luther's parents is not of a nature to excite any confidence in the reliability of his information about Luther's youth. In Rome people were already perfectly acquainted with Luther's antecedents, as information had been obtained from reliable witnesses even before his final excommunication. The tittle-tattle of this new informant could accordingly have no influence on the opinion concerning him already prevailing there.

After Vergerio the Nuncio had returned to Rome in the beginning of 1536, full of extravagant hopes, he took part in the drafting of the Bull already mentioned, summoning the Council to meet at Mantua in 1537. In the same year he was consecrated bishop. He was not, however, employed in diplomacy as frequently as he wished. In 1541 unfavourable reports began to circulate concerning his attitude towards the Church; he was charged with Protestant

[1] "Senza nervo, sensa iudicio et una bestia." "Nuntiaturberichte," p. 543. "Bestia" in such a connection even now does not signify a "beast," but rather a foolish man of whom no use can be made.

[2] "Ha li occhi sguerzi, li quali quanto più io mirava, tanto più mi pareva di vederli appunto simili a quelli, che qualche volta io ho veduto, di qualche uno iudicato inspiritato, così affogati, inconstanti et con certo come furor et rabie, che vi si vede dentro" (p. 541).

[3] "Che egli habbia qualche demonio adosso."

[4] In Friedensburg, "Nuntiaturberichte," p. 554.

leanings, though some of the witnesses in the trial which he had to stand at Venice protested his entire innocence. At any rate, towards the close of 1548 he openly apostatised and fled to the Grisons, where he placed his services at the disposal of the Swiss Reformers. His desire to distinguish himself next caused him to abandon the Swiss Zwinglians and to settle at Tübingen. After many journeys, undertaken with the object of thwarting the Church of Rome, this pushful and unrestrained man died at Tübingen in 1565, still at enmity with Catholicism.[1]

### 3. The Schmalkalden Assembly of 1537. Luther's Illness

The Schmalkalden League, established in 1531 (see above, p. 64 ff.), was in the main directed against the Emperor and the Empire. It had grown stronger by the accession of other Princes and States who bound themselves to render mutual assistance in the interests of the innovations. In the very year Vergerio started on his mission of peace in December, 1535, the warlike alliance, headed by Hesse and the Saxon Electorate, had been renewed at Schmalkalden for ten years. It undertook to raise 10,000 foot soldiers and 2000 horse for the defence of the Evangel, and, in case of need, to double the number.

To oppose this a more united and better organised league of the Catholics was imperatively called for; the alliance already entered into by some of the Princes who remained true to the older Church, required to be strengthened and enlarged. In 1538 the new leaguers met at Nuremberg; at their head were Charles V. and Ferdinand the German King, while amongst the most prominent members were the Dukes Wilhelm and Ludwig of Bavaria and the Archbishops of Mayence and Salzburg, whose secular principalities were very considerable.

Arming of troops, threats of war, and petty broils aroused apprehension again and again, but, on the whole, peace was maintained till Luther's death.

The protesting Estates were desirous of deciding, at a convention to be held at Schmalkalden on Candlemas Day, 1537, upon the attitude to be assumed towards the Council

[1] On Vergerio, particularly on his trial, see G. Buschbell, "Reformation und Inquisition in Italien um die Mitte des 16. Jahrh.," Paderborn, 1910, p. 103 ff.

convened by the Pope to Mantua. Hence, on August 30, 1536, Johann Frederick, Elector of Saxony, instructed Luther to draw up a preliminary writing; he was to state on Scriptural grounds what he felt it his duty to advance concerning all the Articles of his teaching as though he were in the presence of a Council or before the Judgment-Seat of God, and also to point out those Articles regarding which some concessions might be made "without injury to God or His Word."

Luther therefore set to work on his "Artickel so da hetten sollen auffs Concilion zu Mantua," etc., duly printed in 1538, with some slight alterations.

Here, whilst expounding theologically the various Lutheran doctrines, he gives his opinion on the Pope; this opinion is all the more remarkable because incorporated in a document intended to be entirely dispassionate and to furnish the Council with a clear statement of the new faith. The Pope, so Luther declares, is "merely bishop or parish-priest of the churches of Rome"; the universal spiritual authority he had arrogated to himself was "nothing but devilish fable and invention"; he roared like the dragon in the Apocalypse, who led the whole world astray (Apoc. xii. 9); he told people: "All you do is done in vain unless you take me for your God." "This point plainly proves that he is the real Endchrist and Antichrist, who sets himself up against and above Christ, because he will not allow Christians to be saved without his authority. . . . This even the Turks and 'Tatters' do not dare to attempt, great enemies of Christians though they be." "Hence, as little as we can adore the devil himself, as Lord and God, so little can we suffer his apostle, the Pope, or Endchrist, to rule as our Head and Lord. For his real work is lying and murder, and the eternal destruction of body and soul, as I have proved at length in many books."[1]

Luther concludes this memorable theological essay (at least in the printed version) with an application to the projected Council: "If those who obey the Evangel attend it, our party will be standing before the Pope and the devil himself." At the Diet of Augsburg they stood before the Empire, "before the Emperor and secular authorities," who had been gracious enough to give the cause a hearing; now, however, we must say to the Pope, as in the book of Zacharias [iii. 2] the angel said to the devil: 'May God rebuke thee, Satan.'"[2]

When engaged on this work, and whilst the Schmalkalden meeting was in progress, Luther appears to have been the prey of a perfect paroxysm of fury. Hate, as a positive mental disorder, then attained in him an acute crisis. Later

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 181 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

on, his anger abated for a while, as though exhausted, until, just before his death, the spirit of the storm broke out afresh with hurricane violence in his "Wider das Bapstum zu Rom vom Teuffel gestifft."

At the time he wrote his work in preparation for the Schmalkalden meeting he was already ailing. His nervous system was strained beyond all limit. Hence we can more readily understand the passion which seems to possess him against that Church of Rome, which, instead of collapsing, as he had fondly hoped she would, was daily growing stronger in spite of all her losses.

The "Artickel," which were submitted to Johann Frederick the Elector, on January 6, 1537, were signed likewise by Jonas, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, and Melanchthon. Melanchthon, however, because the abuse of the Pope did not meet with his approval and was scarcely to be squared with his previous temporising assurances, added that, he, for his part, was ready, "in the interests of peace and the common unity of those Christians who are now subject to him and may be so in the future," to admit the Pope's supremacy over the bishops; but the Pope was to hold his office only by "human right" and "in as far as he was willing to admit the Evangel." Johann Frederick was sufficiently clear-sighted to see through this proposal—so typical of Melanchthon—and to recognise in it a vain attempt to square the circle. He expressed his disapproval of the addition, pointing out that any recognition of the Papacy would involve a return to the old bondage. The Pope "and his successors would leave no stone unturned to destroy and root out us and our successors."

The opinion of the Elector prevailed in the Council of the Princes and among the preachers assembled at Schmalkalden.

For all their exasperation against the Pope, Luther, and the Wittenberg theologians, were not averse to taking part in the Council. Luther, for instance, opined, that they ought not to give the Papists an excuse for saying they had made impossible the holding of a Council.[1] In a memorandum of December 6, 1536, the theologians, with Luther and Amsdorf, advised that the Council should be promoted,

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 168; also "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 5, p. 51 ff. "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 202. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 385.

so as to render possible a protest. The proposal of the Elector to hold an opposition Council they rejected, urging that such a Council would "look terribly like establishing a schism"; moreover, the lack of agreement among themselves would permit of no such thing, for they would be exposing themselves to the contempt of their opponents, and holding back foreign countries from joining the Evangel. On the other hand, it was the duty of the authorities to offer resistance in the interests of their subjects and Divine worship, should the Council prove unjust; open violence and notorious injustice were to be met by violence.[1] In this memorandum Melanchthon's influence is clear enough in the apprehension of any appearance of setting up a "schism." Luther signed it with the words: "I, Martin Luther, will do my best by prayer, and if needs be, with the fist."[2] The Schmalkalden delegates, however, as we shall see below, strode rough-shod over this memorandum and declined to have anything to do with the Council.

On January 31, 1537, Luther, with Melanchthon and Bugenhagen, set out for Schmalkalden where a Papal envoy, the Bishop of Acqui, was also expected. On the journey he said in the presence of several gentlemen of the Nuncio's retinue: "So the devil is sending the Papal emissary as his ambassador to Schmalkalden to see if, perchance, he can destroy God's work." Besides the secular delegates, some forty Protestant theologians had gathered at Schmalkalden, and Melanchthon was in the greatest apprehension lest quarrels should break out amongst them.[3] His fears were not altogether groundless, for it was not long before the usual want of unanimity became apparent amongst the Lutheran preachers. The "Artickel," drawn up by Luther, aroused dissension. They were not equally acceptable to all, some, for instance, taking offence at his teaching on the Supper, so that a controversy on this point between such men as Amsdorf and Osiander on the one side and Blaurer on the other, was to be feared. Melanchthon, however, was more cautious and avoided insisting on his own divergent

[1] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 126 *seq.* "Briefwechsel," 11, p. 137.

[2] Seckendorf ("Comment de Lutheranismo," 3, p. 145) says of the words "with the fist": "*id est calamo.*" This is confirmed by a statement of Luther's, according to which he was determined to write against the "Romish beast" with an even stronger fist (below, p. 437).

[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 384.

view regarding the Eucharist. He and Cruciger were sternly charged by Cordatus, the minister, with not preaching aright Luther's doctrine of Justification by Faith, and the charge was supported also by Amsdorf. Osiander, the Nuremberg theologian, finally set against a sermon of Luther's on the divine sonship conferred on the Christian by faith in Christ (1 John iv. 1 ff.), a sermon of his own, embodying quite other views.

Luther could think of no better plan than to lay before the Elector his fears lest internal strife should prove the undoing of his whole enterprise, and to implore him, as father of the country, to take some steps to prevent this.

Owing to the disunion rife among the preachers, Luther's "Artickel" were never officially discussed by the delegates. This was primarily Melanchthon's doing; by means of an intrigue which he started at the very outset of the Conference, and thanks to the assistance of the Landgrave of Hesse, he had caused it to be settled behind Luther's back, that no explicit acceptance of Luther's exposition of faith was called for, seeing that the Estates had already taken their stand on the basis of the Augsburg Confession and the Wittenberg Concord. "The device was characteristic enough of Melanchthon, but his procedure as a whole can scarcely be acquitted of insincerity." (Ellinger.)

Melanchthon was now entrusted with the preparation of a fresh work on the Papal Primacy, to be described more fully later.[1] Although it far exceeds in malice any other work of Melanchthon's, or perhaps for that very reason, it was accepted by the Princes and the theologians.

The truth is, that, in their hostility to Popery all were at one. Opposition to the Church was the bond which united them.

Meanwhile, whilst at Schmalkalden, Luther had been visited by a severe attack of stone, an old trouble which now seemed to put his life in danger. During this illness his hatred of the Pope broke out afresh, yet, later, he felt justified in boasting of the moderation he had displayed during the convention, because, forsooth, of his advice regarding attendance at the Council. He prides himself on the consideration which at Schmalkalden he had shown

[1] See below, p. 439.

the Papists: "Had I died there, it would probably have been the ruin of the Papists, for only after I am dead will they see what a friend they have had in me; for other preachers will prove incapable of the same moderation and '*epieikeia*.'"[1]

Luther's illness increased to such an extent that fears were entertained for his life. He himself thought seriously of death, though never for an instant did he think of reconciliation.

His prayer, as he related later, was as follows: "O God, Thou knowest that I have taught Thy Word faithfully and zealously. . . . O Lord Jesus Christ, how grand a thing is it for a man to die by the sword for Thy Word. . . . I die as an enemy of Thine enemies, I die under the ban of the Pope, but he dies under Thy ban. . . . I die in hatred of the Pope ('*ego morior in odio papæ*')."[2] "Thou, Lord Christ," he said, "take vengeance upon Thine enemy; I have done well in tearing the Pope to pieces." On February 25, when racked with pain, he said to Herr von Ponikau, one of the Elector's chamberlains: "I have to be stoned like Stephen, and the Pope will rejoice. But I hope he will not laugh long; my epitaph shall be verified: 'In life, O Pope, I was thy plague, in dying I shall be thy death ('*Pestis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua, Papa*')."[3]

On February 26 the sick man was brought away from Schmalkalden in a carriage, the intention being to convey him to Wittenberg. Luther was anxious not to rejoice the Papists by breathing his last in a locality where the Bishop of Acqui, the Papal envoy, was stopping. "At least not in the presence of the monster, the Pope's ambassador," as he said. "I would die willingly enough were not the devil's Legate at Schmalkalden, for he would cry aloud to the whole world that I had died of fright." This he said before his departure.[4] Seated in the carriage as the horses were being got ready, he received the greetings of those present and made the sign of the cross over them, saying: "May the Lord fill you with His blessing and with hatred of the Pope."[5] Mathesius, his pupil, adds in his 11th Sermon on Luther: "Then and there, in the carriage, he made his last will and testament, willing and bequeathing to his friends the preachers, '*odium in papam*,' viz. that they should not allow themselves to be deceived by the Pope's doctrine but remain constant to the end in their hostility to his idolatry."[6] According to Ericeus he also said on leaving: "Take heed to this when I am dead: If the Pope lays aside his crown, renounces his throne and primacy, and admits that he has

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 413 ("Tischreden"). Cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, p. 169.
[2] "Werke," Erl. ed., 61, p. 436.
[3] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 389.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 390 f.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Mathesius, "Historien," p. 130'.

erred and destroyed the Church, then and only then will we receive him into our communion, otherwise he will always remain in our eyes the real Antichrist."[1]

After Luther's departure the assembly considered the question of the Council. Any share in it was refused point-blank. Even the letters on the subject which the Legate had brought with him were returned unopened. In the final resolution the proposed Œcumenical Council—although it was to be held in complete accordance with ancient ecclesiastical rules—was described as a partisan, unreliable and unlawful assembly because it would consist exclusively of bishops, would be presided over by the Pope and would not be free to decide according to the Word of God.

In its outspoken rejection of the Council the Conference was more logical than Luther and his theological counsellors. The warlike company brushed aside all the considerations of prudence and policy alleged by the more timid theologians.

They further declared, that they would maintain the Wittenberg Concord of 1536; it was also stated in the resolutions that their theologians were agreed upon all the points of the Augsburg Confession and "*Apologia*"; one article only, viz. that concerning the authority of the Pope, had they altered; in other words, they had accepted the recently drafted document of Melanchthon's, which, however, repudiated the Papacy far more firmly than the Augsburg Confession had done. (See below, p. 439.)

Luther, though absent, had every reason to be satisfied with what had been achieved.

Luther's condition had meanwhile improved, and he had already returned to Wittenberg. On the very first day of his journey he had felt some relief, and on the following day he wrote to Melanchthon to inform him of it, crowning the joyful tidings with his blessing:

"May God preserve you all and cast down Satan under your feet with all his crew, viz. the monsters of the Roman Curia."[2]

On his arrival at Gotha, the journey having proved toilsome and exhausting, and the malady again threatening to grow worse, he made his so-called "First Will." It commences with the words: "I know, God be praised, that I have done rightly in storming the Papacy with the Word of God, for Popery spells

[1] N. Ericeus in the Sylvula MS., p. 202′; "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 186, n.

[2] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 4, p. 58.

blasphemy against God, Christ and the Gospel." In his name they were to tell the Elector, our sovereign, and also the Landgrave, that "they were not to allow themselves to be disturbed at the howls of their opponents, who charged them with stealing the possessions of the Church; they do not rob like some others do; indeed, I see [such at least was his *hope*] how, with these goods, they provide for the welfare of religion. If a little of it falls to their share, who has a better right to it than they? Such possessions belong to the Princes rather than to the rascally Papists. Both sovereigns were to do confidently on behalf of the Evangel whatever the Holy Ghost inspired them to do. . . . If they are not pure in all things, but in some respects sinners, as our foes allege, yet they must trust in God's mercy. . . . I am now ready to die if the Lord so will, but I should like to live at least till Whitsun, in order, before all the world, to write against the Roman beast and its Kingdom with a heavier fist. . . . If I recover I intend to do far worse than ever before. And now I commend my soul into the hands of the Father and my Lord Jesus Christ, Whom I have preached and confessed upon earth."[1]

His friends related that at Gotha he made his confession, and received "absolution" from Bugenhagen. After his state of health had greatly improved he was able to continue his journey to Wittenberg, where he arrived safely. Thence, a week later, he was able to announce to Spalatin the progress of his "convalescence, by God's grace," commending himself likewise to his prayers.[2]

His anger against the Pope, to which hitherto he had not been able to give free rein, he now utilised to stimulate and refresh his exhausted bodily and mental powers. He once said, that, to write, pray or preach well, he had first to be angry. In Mathesius we find Luther's own description of the effects of his anger: "Then my blood is refreshed, my mind becomes keen and all my temptations vanish."[3]

Here we must revert once more to his maledictory prayer against the Pope and the Papists, and to certain other of his sayings.[4]

"If I am so cold at heart that I cannot pray," so he said on one occasion to Cordatus, "I call to mind the impiety and ingratitude of my foes, the Pope and King Ferdinand, in order to inflame my heart with righteous hate, so that I can say: Hallowed be Thy Name, etc., and then my prayer glows with fervour."[5] As given in the German edition of the Table-Talk, his words are briefer, but none the less striking: "I conjure up the godlessness of the Pope with all his ulcers and parasites, and soon I grow warm and

[1] "Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 185.
[2] *Ibid.*, 5, p. 59.
[3] "Aufzeichnungen," p. 200.
[4] Cp. above, p. 208 f.
[5] "Tagebuch," p. 111.

burn with anger and hate."[1] As already related, in his maledictory Paternoster, he accompanies the petitions of the Lord's Prayer with a commentary of curses.[2] He would fain see others too, "cursing the Papacy with the Our Father, that it may catch St. Vitus's Dance."[3] Concerning his Paternoster he assures us, "I say this prayer daily with my lips, and in my heart without intermission." And yet he does not shrink from adding: "Nevertheless I preserve a friendly, peaceable and Christian spirit towards everyone; this even my greatest enemies know."[4]

In 1538, the year after his serious illness, an amended edition of his "Unterricht der Visitatorn an die Pharhern" was issued by him. Although he exhorts the pastors to "refrain from abusive language" in the pulpit, yet he expressly tells them to "damn the Papacy and its followers with all earnestness as already damned by God, like the devil and his kingdom."[5]

Luther's character presents many psychological problems which seem to involve the observer in inextricable difficulty; certain phenomena of his inner life can scarcely be judged by common standards. The idea of the devil incarnate in Popery distorts his judgment, commits him to statements of the maddest kind, and infects even his moral conduct. It is not easy to say how far he remained a free agent in this matter, or whether the quondam Catholic, priest and monk never felt the prick of conscience, yet such questions obtrude themselves at every step. For the present we shall merely say that his freedom, and consequently his actual responsibility, were greater at the time he first gave such ideas a footing in his mind, than when he had fallen completely under their spell.[6]

### 4. Luther's Spirit in Melanchthon

During the spring of 1537, when Luther was at Schmalkalden writhing under bodily anguish and the influence of his paroxysm of hate, a notable change took place in Melanchthon's attitude towards the older Church. The earlier spiritual crisis, if we may speak of such a thing, ended in his case in an almost inexplicable embitterment against the Church of his birth.

A proof of this is more particularly to be found in the document then drawn up by Melanchthon, "On the power and primacy of the Pope."[7]

[1] "Werke," Erl. ed., 60, p. 61; cp. "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 2, p. 294.
[2] *Ibid.*, 25², p. 254, 128.
[3] To Caspar Müller, January 10, 1536, "Werke," Erl. ed., 55, p. 120 ("Briefwechsel," 10, p. 291).
[4] "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 470; Erl. ed., 25², p. 128.
[5] *Ibid.*, 23, p. 57. [6] See vol. vi., xxxvi.
[7] "Symbolische Bücher," p. 328 ff. "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 272 *seq.*

But a short time before he had looked upon the declaration against the Pope, drafted by Luther for the Schmalkalden Conference, as too strong. Yet, after having, as related above,[1] all unknown to Luther, contrived to prevent any discussion of the latter's so-called "Artickel," and having, at the request of the Princes and Estates, set to work on a statement concerning the Primacy and the Episcopate, he himself came gradually, perhaps without noticing it, under the influence of the passion of antipopery which found expression at this Assembly.

In Melanchthon's Schmalkalden writing "On the Power and Primacy," we read, that "the Popes defend godless rites and idolatry"; they had introduced horrible darkness into the Church. "The marks of Antichrist agree with the empire of the Pope," as is plain from Paul.[2] "The Pope arrogates to himself the right to alter the doctrine of Christ. . . . He even claims rights over the souls of the departed." "He makes himself God," for he recognises no authority above him. "These errors he vindicates with the utmost cruelty . . . slaying all who differ from him." All the faithful must therefore "curse" him and regard his teaching as "devils' doctrine."

After this profession of pure doctrine comes the chapter on abuses.[3] "The profanation of Masses," amongst the Papists, "is idolatry"; the "most revolting money-making" is carried on by this means. "They teach that sin is forgiven on account of the value of our works and then require each one to be ever in doubt as to whether his sins have really been forgiven. Nowhere do they clearly say that it is on account of the merits of Christ that sins are forgiven gratuitously. On the other hand, they do away with true worship, viz. the exercise of that faith which wrestles with despair."[4] "Vows they have stamped as righteousness before God, declaring that they merit the forgiveness of sins." It is the duty of the Christian Princes to intervene; they must see that "errors are removed and consciences healed." They "must not assist in strengthening idolatry and other infamies, or in slaughtering the Saints." They, beyond all others, "must place a check on the licentiousness of the Popes," the more so "since the Pope has bound the bishops under terrible curses to support his tyranny and his godless behaviour."

A shorter memorandum of Melanchthon's, appended to the

[1] See above, p. 434.

[2] "Symbolische Bücher," p. 336; in n. 39 and 40, the thesis that the Pope is Antichrist is proved syllogistically from 2 Thessalonians ii. 3 f.: "*Plane notæ antichristi competunt in regnum papæ et sua membra.*"

[3] Page 337 f.

[4] "*Abolent veros cultus, videlicet exercitia fidei luctantis cum desperatione.*" See above, p. 345, how Melanchthon frequently emphasises the terrors which precede the working of the evangelical faith.

above, referred to the "Power and jurisdiction of the Bishops."[1] This in the clearest and most decided fashion marks the breakdown of all the author's earlier seeming concessions concerning the retention of the episcopate. "Since the bishops," he says towards the close, "in their dependence on the Pope defend his godless doctrine and godless worship . . . second the Pope's cruelty and tyrannically abuse the jurisdiction they have wrenched from the clergy . . . the churches must not acknowledge them as bishops."

At the end there is a hint at the wealth of the bishops, doubtless not unwelcome to the Princes: "The bishops can no longer hold their lands and revenues with a good conscience" because they do not make use of them for the good of souls; their possessions ought rather to be employed "for the Church," "to provide for the preachers [ministers], to support students and the poor, and in particular to assist the law-courts, especially the matrimonial courts." Here we have his sanction to the Church's spoliation.

We may be certain that Melanchthon never came to use such language, so similar to Luther's, concerning the Papal Antichrist, idolatry and murder, solely as the result of pressure on the part of the Princes, who had been enraged by the invitation to attend the Council, and were determined to crush once and for all every hope of conciliation. We may take it that his new frame of mind was partly due to Luther's serious illness. Luther believed that his end was nigh, he adjured the Princes and his friends manfully to tackle Antichrist, and he cursed the dissensions that had broken out amongst his theologians, and promised soon to ruin his life's work. This made a great impression on Melanchthon. As a matter of fact the relations between him and Luther, subsequent to the latter's recovery, became closer than they had been for years.

The change in Melanchthon at Schmalkalden was immortalised by his frightful document on the Pope and the Bishops being subscribed to by thirty-two of the theologians and preachers there present.[2] When, at a later date, the

[1] Page 340 ff.

[2] Kolde, in the Introduction to the 10th edition of the "Symbolische Bücher," p. l. "This was the only official Confession agreed to at the Schmalkalden Convention." When Luther caused his bitter "Artickel"—which had not been accepted at Schmalkalden at all (above, p. 431)—to be printed in 1538 ("Werke," Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 163 ff.), he nevertheless spoke of them as an official deed agreed to at the Schmalkalden Convention, declaring: "They have also been agreed upon unanimously by our followers and accepted, so that—

formulæ of Concord were drawn up, it was included amongst the "symbolical books" of Lutheranism.[1] As such, along with the others, it appears down to the present day, even in the latest edition (1907), at the head of which is printed the traditional motto of the whole series: "One Lord, one faith, one Baptism" (Eph. iv. 5).

At the Schmalkalden Conference, Melanchthon, in spite of what he had written concerning the Pope, declared himself, like Luther, in favour of accepting with due reserves the invitation to the Council, as otherwise they would be rendering their position more difficult and would make the whole world think that they had rudely refused the olive-branch. The rejection of his proposal annoyed him, as also did the discourteous treatment—described by Melanchthon as "very vulgar"—which the Papal Legate endured at the hands of the Elector Johann Frederick. His fit of indignation does not, however, seem to have lasted long, as he did not refuse the invitation to draw up a statement, addressed in the name of the Assembly to all Christian Princes, in which the Council was repudiated in the strongest terms. The refusal to take any part in it, so it declares, was rendered imperative by the clear intention of the Pope to suppress heresy.[2]

His hostility and his irritation against the Papacy repeatedly found expression in after years.

It was quite in Luther's style, when, in a little work which appeared at Wittenberg in 1539, he called the Pope, with his bishops and defenders, "the tyrants and persecutors of Christ," who "are not the Church; neither are those who support them or approve such acts of violence."[3]

were the Pope and his adherents ever so bold as to hold a Council, without lying and deceit but in all sincerity and truth, as he ought to do—these Articles ought to be publicly put forward as the confession of our faith." Was he really ignorant of the actual facts of the case? It was surely to his interest, after the Conference of Schmalkalden, to inform himself exactly of the fate of his Articles. Kolde, *ibid.*, p. 61, is of opinion that he evidently made the above assertion "in ignorance of the negotiations which had taken place at Schmalkalden during his illness." Kolde, moreover, shows that Luther's publication did not even agree with the original as "presented at Schmalkalden"; but contained various additions, some of them of considerable length," though "without any alteration of meaning."

[1] "Symbolische Bücher," *ibid.*, p. xlix. f.

[2] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 346.

[3] "*De ecclesiæ autoritate et de veterum scriptis.*" Kawerau, "Versuche," p. 50.

Before the War of Schmalkalden he republished several times Luther's inflammatory pamphlet, "Warnunge an seine lieben Deudschen," of 1531 (see vol. ii., p. 391), in order to move public opinion against the Empire. To these new editions of the booklet against the Popish "bloodhounds"[1]—one of the most violent the author ever wrote — Melanchthon added a preface in which he shows himself "animated and carried away by Luther's words."[2] In reading it we feel the warmth of the fiery spirit which glows in Luther's writings, for instance, when he classes his opponents with the "cut-throats of the streets," whom "to resist was a work well-pleasing to God."[3] The Pope, according to him, is anxious "to re-establish his idolatry and his errors by dint of bloodshed, murder, everlasting devastation of the German nation and the destruction of the Electoral and Princely houses." Thus "Spaniards and Italians, and perhaps even possibly the Turks," will break into the German cities. "The devils rage and cause all manner of desolation." Our enemies are "knowingly persecutors of the truth and murderers of the Saints." Whoever is about to die let him consider, that the death of the righteous is more pleasing to God than "the life of Cain and the luxury and power of all the bishops and cardinals."

Hence it was but natural that violent measures of defence should appear to Melanchthon both called-for and meritorious.

As a just measure of defence and resistance he regarded his own suggestion made to the Elector of Saxony through his Chancellor on the occasion of the Protestantising of the town of Halle, the residence of Albert of Brandenburg, viz. that Albert's whole diocese of Halle and Magdeburg should be taken possession of by the Elector. Owing to Luther's dissuasion this act of violence, which would have had momentous consequences, was, however, prevented. Melanchthon's advice was, that they "should, as opportunity arose, seize the bishopries, in order that the priests might be emboldened to abstain from knavish practices, to co-operate in bringing about a lasting peace, and to leave the Word of God unmolested for the future."[4]

In this way Melanchthon more than once gave the lie to those who extol his kindliness. Luther once said, that, whereas he stabbed with a hog-spear, Philip preferred to use goads and needles, though his little punctures turned out more painful and difficult to heal; the "little man" (Melanchthon was of small stature) was pious, and, even when he did wrong, meant no ill; he sinned because he was too lenient and allowed himself to be taken in; but this

[1] One of the terms there used by Luther; "Werke," Weim. ed., 30, 3, p. 282; Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 12.

[2] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 527, on the preface of 1546, reprinted in "Corp. ref.," 6, p. 190 *seq.*

[3] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 528.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 416, in 1541.

sort of thing was of little use; he, on the other hand, thought it best to speak out to the knaves; for clods a pick-axe was very useful; Philip allowed himself to be devoured, but he, on the contrary, devoured everything and spared no one.[1]

In his controversial writings and memoranda, written in well-turned and polished language, Melanchthon went on as before to accuse the Catholic theologians and the Popes of holding doctrines and opinions, of which, as Döllinger rightly said, "no theologian had ever thought, but the opposite of which all had taught."[2]

He refused to recognise what was good and just in the long-looked-for proposals for the amelioration of the Church which the Papal commission submitted to Paul III. in 1537. They were made known at Wittenberg through their publication by Johann Sturm of Strasburg.

Luther at once took the field against them with his favourite weapons, the "pick-axe" and the "hog-spear."[3] Melanchthon mentions them, but has "not a word to say in favour of the important reforms they proposed. . . . The fact, however, that one of Erasmus's writings was therein characterised as harmful, incensed him against Sadolet [one of the Cardinals whose signatures were appended]." "With good reason, and, from the schoolmaster's point of view, quite justly,"[4] they say of the "*Colloquia familiaria*" of Erasmus, that "this book should be forbidden in the schools," as it might do harm to young minds.[5] This greatly displeased Melanchthon, himself a writer on pedagogy;[6]

[1] "Colloq.," ed. Bindseil, 3, pp. 201, 203, Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 454 f. Cp. above, p. 321.

[2] "Die Reformation," p. 280.

[3] "Werke," Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 251 ff.: "Ratschlag von der Kirche. . . . Mit einer Vorrede und Glosse M. Luthers," 1538. The writing begins: "The Pope with his wretched Council is like a cat with her kittens," and concludes (p. 277): Unchastity "is no sin at Rome." Yet unchastity was one of the abuses assailed in the very writing which he here reprints, which urges that "Rome ought to be the model and example of all other cities." Of the ambition prevalent at Rome he writes in his usual way (p. 253): "If all such filth were to be stirred up in a free Council, what a stench there would be." On the title-page he depicts three cardinals: "Desperate knaves, bent on cleansing the Churches with foxes' brushes" (p. 254).

[4] Kawerau, "Versuche," p. 38.

[5] "Werke," Erl. ed., $25^2$, p. 272.

[6] "Corp. ref.," 3, p. 507, to Camerarius, March 31, 1538: "*ridicula deliberatio*," in which Erasmus's work was prohibited. *Ibid.*, p. 525, to Spalatin, May 16, 1538, where the whole of the proposals for reform are called "*illæ cardinalium ineptiæ*."

and yet the "*Colloquia*" in question are so permeated with indecent elements that they have been rightly instanced to prove how lax were the views then prevalent in Humanistic circles.[1] Luther himself strongly disapproved of the "*Colloquia*" of Erasmus, declaring it a godless book, and forbidding his children to read it; therein the author put his own antichristian ideas in the mouths of others.[2] "Erasmus, the scoundrel," he says, gives vent to his contempt for religion "more particularly in his '*Colloquia*.'"[3] "He is an incarnate scamp, as is shown by his books, notably by the '*Colloquia*.'"[4]

In the Antinomian controversy at home, between Johann Agricola and Luther, it was Melanchthon who sought by means of adroit formulæ and memoranda to achieve the impossible, viz. to square Agricola's views with Luther's teaching at that time. In reality Melanchthon was merely working for the success of his own milder version of Luther's view of the law, to which moreover the latter had already given his assent. To Agricola, Melanchthon wrote feelingly: "In all that Luther does there is a certain Achillean violence, of which you are not the only victim."[5]

On the outbreak of the Osiander controversy on Confession, the ever-ready Melanchthon again set to work, endeavouring to pour oil on the troubled waters. He assured Osiander that "were I able to bind down with chains of adamant the tempers of all the clergy, I should assuredly make this the goal of my most earnest endeavour."[6]

Melanchthon's 1540 edition of the Augsburg Confession, the so-called "*Confessio variata*," was a good sample of his elasticity and power of adaptation in the domain of dogma. The "*Variata*" caused, however, quite a commotion amongst the representatives of the innovations.

In the "*Confessio Variata*" Melanchthon, in order to curry favour with the Swiss and the adherents of the *Tetrapolitana*, with whom his party was politically leagued, set aside the "semblance of Transubstantiation" contained in the Article concerning the Supper (Art. x.) and struck out the words

[1] W. Walther, "Für Luther," 1906, p. 605 f.; he quotes at length some indecent passages.
[2] Cordatus, "Tagebuch," p. 346.
[3] Mathesius, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 212.
[4] Schlaginhaufen, "Aufzeichnungen," p. 96.
[5] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 371. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

"*quod corpus et sanguis Christi vere adsint,*" as well as the rejection of the contrary belief. For these was substituted: "Together with the bread and wine in the Supper the communicants are shown ['*exhibeantur*' instead of the former '*adsint et distribuantur*'] the Body and Blood of Christ." This was practically to abandon the Real Presence. "Neither the doctrine of Bucer [who was a Zwinglian] on the Supper, nor that of Calvin, is excluded."[1]

At a later date, in 1575, Nicholas Selnecker, a Leipzig professor, whilst actual witnesses were yet living, declared that he had been informed by officials of high standing that the alterations concerning the Supper in the "*Variata*" were due to Philip of Hesse's epistolary representations to Melanchthon. The former had held out the hope that he, and also the Swiss, would accept the Confession should his suggestion be accepted.[2] We may call to mind that about that same time, i.e. about December, 1539, the Landgrave was desirous of yet another concession in his favour, viz. of sanction for his bigamy, and that Bucer, who had been sent by him to Wittenberg, threw out the hint that, were permission refused, the Prince would forsake the Evangelical cause.

Melanchthon also obliterated in the "*Variata*" several other "traces of a too diplomatic attempt to conciliate the Romanists. . . . Melanchthon's clearer perception of the doctrine of Justification also made some alteration necessary." The Article "*De iustificatione*" (Art. iv.) was accordingly revised, and likewise the Article "*De bonis operibus*" (Art. xx.), that both might correspond with the doctrine already embodied in the 1535 edition of the "*Loci.*" In Article iv. the brief "*hanc fidem imputat Deus pro iustitia*" was removed and replaced by: "*homines iustos pronuntiari, id est reconciliari,*" by the imputation of righteousness, this being explained at considerable length. A new interpretation was also given to the doctrine of good works, i.e. by the thesis, that obedience to the law is necessary on the part of the justified.[3] In conversion, the necessity of contrition, and that not merely passive, previous to Justification

[1] Cp. the passage in the reprint of the "*Variata,*" "Corp. ref.," 26, p. 357, with the same in the original Confession ("Symbol. Bücher,"[10] p. 41). Our quotations are from Loofs, "Dogmengesch,"[4] p. 864 f.: "In view of the new idea of the Eucharist which he gradually adopted, we cannot doubt that Melanchthon was anxious to leave an open door for future agreement with the Swiss." Thus Kolde, "Symbol. Bücher"[10], Introd., p. xxvi.

[2] Selnecker, "*Hist. narratio de Luthero, postremæ ætatis Elia,*" Lipsiæ, 1575, Fol. H2: "*Landgravium concepisse optimam spem de voluntate ipsorum et accessione ad unanimem Augustanam Confessionem amplectendam, si modo improbatio et damnatio sententiæ ipsorum, quam hactenus habuissent, eximeretur, atque hoc ipsum clementer perscripsisse ad D. Philippum et petiisse, exemplaria alia, omissis illis particulis, imprimi.*" Cp. Kolde, *ibid.*, p. xxv. n. 3. Selnecker took Melanchthon's part in the theological controversies of his day.

[3] "Corp. ref.," 26, p. 367 *seq.*

by faith is asserted, the Divine Will that all men be saved is openly advocated, that God is the author of sin is more strongly denied than before.[1]

In spite of all these alterations, which, more particularly that concerning the Supper, might have wounded Luther's susceptibilities, "Melanchthon was never reproved on account of the '*Variata*' either by Luther or by others [of the sect]; what we hear to the contrary is nothing but an invention of the anti-Philippians. The truth is that the '*Variata*' was generally accepted without question and made use of officially, for instance, at the religious conferences."[2] In January, 1541, the Augsburg Confession was to be made the basis of the first religious conference at Worms. When Melanchthon appealed to the "*Variata*," Eck drew particular attention to the difference between the new and the old version. Melanchthon, however, insisted on the identity of their contents and would only admit that, in the "*Variata*," he had toned down and chosen his expressions more carefully.[3] As Eck, in order to come to the point, desisted from any further objections, the diversity was passed over. The conference, owing to other causes, was a failure, and so was the next, held at Ratisbon in April of the same year, which was fruitless owing to Melanchthon's own conduct. Calvin, who was present, wrote on May 12 of the practices of the Protestant leaders: "Melanchthon and Bucer drew up equivocating and ambiguous formulæ on Transubstantiation, seeking to hoodwink their adversaries. They were not afraid to deal in equivocal phrases though there is nothing more mischievous."[4]

In connection with the eventual fate of the "*Variata*" we may here refer to the deep animosity which the more zealous Lutherans, with Flacius Illyricus at their head, displayed towards Melanchthon on account of the alterations in the Augsburg Confession. So serious did the rupture become that the dissension between the Protestant theologians actually rendered impossible any public negotiations with the Catholics. This fact proves how little Melanchthon, the then leader of the Protestants, had been successful in welding together with "chains of adamant" the theologians of his party.

The standpoint of the amended Confession of 1540, however, enlisted all Bucer's sympathies on Melanchthon's behalf.

With Bucer's smooth ways Melanchthon had already

[1] Kolde ("Symbol. Bücher"[10], Einleitung, p. xxv.) characterises the enlarging of Articles v. and xx., the stress laid on the necessity of Penance and good works, and also Article xviii. (*De libero arbitrio*) as "real alterations, or at any rate a watering down of their dogmatic character." "The chief stumbling-block proved, not indeed then, but later, to be the wording of Article x. on the Supper. . . . That it was here a question of a real change (in the doctrine of the Eucharist) should never have been denied."

[2] Loofs, *ibid.*, p. 865 *seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 905.

[4] See Janssen, "Hist. of the German People" (Eng. Trans., 6, p. 147).

found himself in harmony during the negotiations in view of the Wittenberg Concord. Mentally the two had much in common. Melanchthon had worked with Bucer at Bonn in 1543, making use of every kind of theological artifice and enlisting the service of those who were in revolt against the moral laws of the Church, in order to bring about the apostasy of Cologne, though their efforts were fruitless. Want of success here was, however, not due to any half-measures on Melanchthon's part, for the latter repeatedly spoke against any toleration being shown to the ancient "errors." In his reply to Eberhard Billick he attacked, for instance, the "idolatry" which prevailed in the Rhineland, witnessed to by the invocation of Saints, the veneration of images, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Processions of the Sacrament.[1]

By this attack on the citadel of Catholicism in the Rhine Province he again reaped a harvest of trouble and anxiety, in consequence of his and Bucer's differences with Luther on the doctrine of the Supper.

In the text of the "Cologne Book of Reform," composed by both, Luther failed to find expressed his doctrine of the Presence of Christ, but rather the opposite. For this reason an outbreak on his part was to be feared, and Melanchthon trembled with anxiety, since, as he says in one of his letters,[2] Luther had already begun to "stir up strife" in his sermons. He fully expected to have to go into exile. It was said that Luther was preparing a profession of faith which all his followers would have to sign. But, this time again, Melanchthon was spared, though Bucer was not so fortunate; in Luther's furious writing against the deniers of the Sacrament, the latter was pilloried, but not Melanchthon.[3] Outwardly Luther and Melanchthon remained friends. In the Swiss camp they were well aware of the difficulties of the scholar who refused to place himself blindly under the spell of Luther's opinions. Bullinger, Zwingli's successor at Zürich, invited him to come there and promised to see that the magistrates provided him with a suitable stipend. Calvin declared later, in 1560, that Melanchthon had several times told him sorrowfully, that

[1] Ellinger, "Melanchthon," p. 424 f.
[2] Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 582.
[3] The writing is entitled "Kurtz Bekentnis," etc. "Werke," Erl. ed., 32, p. 396 ff.

he would much rather live in Geneva than in Wittenberg.[1] Concerning Melanchthon's views on the Eucharist, Calvin said: "I can assure you a hundred times over, that to make out Philip to be at variance with me on this doctrine is like tearing him away from his own self."[2] This explains why Melanchthon always sought to evade the theological question as to how Christ is present in the Sacrament.

One of the last important works he carried out with Luther was the so-called "Wittenberg Reformation," a writing drawn up at the Elector's request. The document, which was presented by Luther and the Wittenberg theologians on January 14, 1545, was intended, in view of the anticipated Diet, to express theologically the position of the Reformers with regard to a "Christian Settlement." Here Melanchthon found himself in his own element. In this work he distinguished himself, particularly by his cleverly contrived attempts to make out the new doctrine to be that of the old and real Church Catholic, by his stern aversion to Popish "idolatry" and by his repudiation of anything that might be regarded as a concession, also by the unfeasible proposal he made out of mockery, that the bishops, in order to make it possible for the Protestants to join their congregations, should "begin by introducing the pure evangelical doctrine and Christian distribution of the Sacraments," in which case Protestants would obey them.[3]

The Wittenbergers, in other words, offered to recognise the episcopate under the old condition, upon which they were ever harping, though well aware that it was impossible for the bishops to accept it.[4]

They thus showed plainly how much store was to be set on the tolerance of certain externals promised by the wily Melanchthon. In this document he "retained certain outward forms to which the people were accustomed, proposing, however, to render them innocuous by imbuing them with a new spirit, and to use them as means of religious and moral education in the interests of the Evangelical cause. It was in the same sense that he was ready to

[1] Kawerau, "Stellung" (above, p. 319, n. 1), p. 30.

[2] "*Ultima admonitio ad Westphalum.*" Cp. "RE. für prot. Theol. und Kirche"[3], Art. "Melanchthon," p. 526.

[3] "Corp. ref.," 5, p. 578 *seq.* Cp. "Luthers Briefe," ed. De Wette, 6, p. 370. Köstlin-Kawerau, 2, p. 599.

[4] Köstlin-Kawerau, *ibid.*

recognise the episcopate."[1] In reality it was the merest irony to demand, that all the bishops of Christendom should prepare the way for and welcome the innovations. Such was, however, the spirit and tone of Melanchthon's "very mild reform," as Brück the Chancellor described it to the Elector. Luther, however, in order as it were to furnish a commentary on its real sense, at that very time put his pen to his last and most revolting work against the Papacy.[2]

[1] Ellinger, *ibid.*, p. 440.

[2] On the book "Das Bapstum vom Teuffel gestifft," see vol. v., xxxiii. 2.

END OF VOL. III

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